

# TRAGEDY OF ERRORS

*The Chronicle of a European •*

A human document with many interesting anecdotes and full of inside experience as naval officer, journalist and diplomat in the service of Austria and Germany

**COUNT  
HANS HUYN**

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"The aim of this book is," writes Count Hans Huyn, "by presenting a variety of reminiscences, observations, and impressions, to describe the development of a personality. It may not be typical, but I think it is at least characteristic of a man of the generation who had just awakened to adult appreciation of pre-War conditions, and notwithstanding the horrors of the War and after-War has retained sufficient resilience to go on believing in a better future."

"This book is not intended to be a volume of memoirs in the accepted sense: it is not a mere catalogue of adventures and anecdotes and a description of meetings with famous men, nor is it an attempt to prove that everything would have been very much better if the leaders of the nations had been of the same opinion as the author."

In so far as the book is concerned with events and personalities the author has a great many facts and interesting observations about the downfall of Imperial Austria, the Weimar Republic, Poland and the new Austria, the Jewish question, the post-War diplomats and journalists. It also describes vividly the adventures of the author as a naval officer, diplomat, journalist and politician from the pre-War period to the present day. It is not a handbook for politicians, but a human document, with many anecdotes and full of inside experience gained in the service of the Austrian and German Governments.

"Count Huyn comes of an old Austrian aristocratic family. He served ten years in the Austrian Navy in which he reached the rank of Lieutenant. After the War he joined the Press Department of the Austrian Chancellery. He was later attached to the Austrian Legation in Warsaw, has represented the semi-official German News Agency, the Wolff-Bureau and has been Press Attaché to the German Legation in Warsaw. In Autumn 1934 the Austrian Government appointed him as Press Attaché to the Austrian Legation in London where he worked with Baron Franckenstein up to the *Anschluss*.

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THE CHRONICLE OF A EUROPEAN





*Photo: Harlip*

Count Hans Huyn.

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THE CHRONICLE OF A EUROPEAN

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C O U N T H A N S H U Y N

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY  
COUNTESS NORA WYDENBRUCK

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**'I AM A MAN OF PEACE**

**I HAVE BEEN FIGHTING ALL MY LIFE.'**

**W. T. STEAD**

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## PREFACE

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IT IS NOT WITHOUT hesitation that I begin to write this book ; in this world of anarchic production and unjust division of goods, which the economists maintain is ruled by the iron law of supply and demand, there is a definite over-production of books. Every few minutes the printing-presses cast forth new books on to the market—books that have been painfully incubated by men who sit at their desks, or that have been put together by industrious compilers in libraries. Nietzsche rightly demanded that books should be written with blood and not with ink. Very few books fulfil this demand, and this may explain why a sense of responsibility and a respect for my fellow-men's leisure made me wait until I had attained middle age before I ventured into the ranks of authors.

These and similar considerations give me food for thought, particularly as since my earliest youth nothing has moved me more profoundly than great literature. One of my first memories is a walk through the fields with my mother. We sat down on a bench and she took a book bound in an old-fashioned binding from her workbag and began to read aloud. I was only six years old at the time, but I can still recall the tones of her clear, expressive voice as she read Goethe's *Erlkoenig*. When she had finished she saw with surprise that the tears were rolling down my cheeks.

Probably it was this childhood experience that awakened in me a feeling for form that was to develop increasingly as I grew older. Not only in artistic production, in every phase of life the undisciplined and formless is contrary to my nature. Chaotic paintings, the unwieldy and endless novels of certain authors, the unæsthetic and hypertrophic symphonies and monstrous operas of certain composers,

the extravagant acts and expressions of certain statesmen appear to me as a sign of impotence. Measure and form are as important as the subject ; thus the overrating of form for its own sake which we sometimes find in France is as reprehensible as the habitual indifference to form prevalent in Germany. The old adage is true, not only for art and politics, but for life in its entirety—only order and measure can lead to freedom. It is all the more important to realize this in an age when disregard of forms and laws has plunged us into a chaos which incapable men are attempting to master with brute force. Force can never give us the form which leads to freedom.

All my life I have sought this joy of ordered freedom which the Greeks understood so well. It has led me to read countless volumes, to spend countless evenings in theatres and concert-halls, to wander through galleries and exhibitions, and it has also decided my actions throughout my political career, according to my conviction that freedom and order can only be based on justice.

The aim of this book is, by presenting a variety of reminiscences, observations, and impressions, to describe the development of a personality. It may not be typical, but I think it is at least characteristic of a man of the generation who had just awakened to adult appreciation of pre-War conditions, and notwithstanding the horrors of the War and after-War has retained sufficient resilience to go on believing in a better future.

This book is not intended to be a volume of memoirs in the accepted sense : it is not a mere catalogue of adventures and anecdotes and a description of meetings with famous men, nor is it an attempt to prove that everything would have been much better if the leaders of the nations had been of the same opinion as the author.

This book will contain no aberrations from subjective truth, but frank and clear confessions. It is not easy for a man who has been brought up in the traditional manner and taught that every mere personal manifestation is to be condemned as unseemly exhibitionism. But as I have now undertaken to face the public, I know that the least my readers can demand is frankness and honesty—and that I will give them.

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## CHAPTER ONE

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### EARLY YEARS

I AM A DESCENDANT of an old Lorraine family which originated on the Lower Rhine. The first Austrian of the name followed Duke Charles of Lorraine in 1683 from Nancy to Vienna, where he fought with the Imperial Army at the raising of the siege and liberation of the city from the Turks. My ancestor's valorous deeds won recognition, and he remained in the Emperor's service. Thus he mapped out the course his descendants were to follow, and it was an understood matter that I, whose father and grandfather had been Austrian officers, should also join the Army.

So I began my life in a world of firm and hallowed traditions. Intellectually a German, emotionally an Austrian, subjectively a nobleman, a liegeman of the Emperor in an almost medieval sense. When I was a child the Imperial Crown of Austria was still surrounded by a mystical radiance, which no effort of imagination can recapture to-day. The Emperor was the central pivot of our existence, the visible source of all power. This attitude prevailed among the officers of the Austrian Army, and it remained almost unchanged in spite of progressive democratization and the acquisition of the so-called 'parliamentary cloak.' It would not be accurate to attribute the historical glamour of the Austrian Imperial Crown to the House of Habsburg alone, although, since the end of the Middle Ages, the Imperial crown had always reverted to members of the Habsburg family. In itself, that is a great deal, but not enough.

Actually, the long line of rulers who imparted its splendour to the Austrian Crown began with Charlemagne. The

mystical emotion that fills us, even to-day, when we hear the awe-inspiring words '*Kaiser und Reich*,' dates back to that Christmas Eve in A.D. 800, when Pope Leo III placed the Roman crown on the brow of Charles, the ruler of the Franks. Charlemagne became the absolute symbol of rulership, so that the Slav peoples have chosen his name to form the word 'king' in their language. ('*Kral*' is Czech for 'king,' '*krul*' Serbian, and '*krol*' Polish; all derived from '*Carolus*.')

The magic emanating from the Crown of the Holy Roman Empire came, in the course of centuries, to be quite naturally identified with the Habsburgs who resided in Vienna. Perhaps one of the most momentous, if not disastrous, events in Germany's history was the decision of Francis I to lay down the crown of the Holy Roman Empire and accept the title of Emperor of Austria. This did not, however, bring about in the eyes of the Austrian people any change in the prerogatives of the House of Habsburg.

To the nobility, the Army, the Civil Servants, and to the vast majority of the people, the Emperor was still what he had actually been in former times: the first lord of Christendom. It is not mere chance that the most precious treasure of the German nation, the crown of the Holy Roman Empire, is kept at the Hofburg in Vienna. It has since been removed to Nuremberg by Hitler. There is also the Sacred Lance, which was borne, a thousand years ago, in advance of Otto the Great in the great battle against the Magyars. We, the German-Austrians, and with us the numerous non-German inhabitants of the old monarchy who were loyal to the old Austrian ideals, were the protagonists of the great moribund vision of German universalism. This ideal imparted to Germans a nobility which they were never to attain again after the idea of a national state had succeeded victoriously through the French Revolution. Now that sufficient time has elapsed, we are able to measure the full consequences of the Greek gift which the German people accepted from the French Revolution. Nationalistic narrowness took the place of universal breadth of vision. Barriers were erected between Germans and non-Germans, so that Germany was robbed of the influx of foreign talent. Nationalism, which is the modern form of self-deification, may be a wise measure of self-protection for small undeveloped nations, who can

cultivate their native gifts in the shadow of its Chinese wall, but for really great nations with an ancient, independent civilization, it is equivalent to self-destruction and abandonment of their mission. In the last hundred and fifty years, since Germany has accepted the doctrine of a national state, her intellectual sphere of influence has narrowed down in a calamitous manner. If she had been aware of her true mission, she should have protested with all her might against the undesirable importation of alien ideas. Yet the Germans indulged in an orgy of nationalism, and replaced the Holy Roman Empire by the restricted German State which Bismarck founded, making matters worse by drawing a dividing line between Germans and Germans. This dealt the death-blow to the German idea, besides destroying the necessary balance between north and south, east and west, to the detriment of both Germany's and Austria's development. Austria suffered as much from the lack of North-German stability and East-German imperturbability as Germany through the loss of Austrian political finesse and South-German charm of manner.

I believe that the restriction of a free interchange of ideas between north and south, resulting from the events of 1866, led to the errors of German and Austrian diplomacy which culminated in the fall of both Empires in 1918.

A prophet, Friedrich Nietzsche, and a sage, Jakob Burckhardt, were already fully aware of these menacing under-currents in the seventies of the last century. They both suffered intensely when they saw 'nationalism in the place of humanitarianism,' as Austria's great poet, Grillparzer, once put it. It was the realization of this fact that impelled Jakob Burckhardt to refuse a chair at the Berlin University and to stay on in his modest native Basle.

The Austrians had meanwhile undertaken a fight which was doomed from the beginning to be a losing one. Their expulsion from the German Federation had confronted the Austrians of the Habsburg countries, which had now become an unwieldy dual monarchy, with an impossible task. Even Bismarck's much-vaunted foresight, which led him to force his king to conclude the Peace of Nikolsburg without territorial gain in view of a possible future alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary, was to prove inadequate.

With his wonted force and brilliance, Bismarck attempted to defend his mistaken policy in his *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, but he stands condemned by history. Everybody knows his famous phrase: "When the Emperor of Austria leaps into the saddle, his peoples follow him." In 1914 the aged Emperor leapt into the saddle once more, and his peoples actually did follow him. Yet the young intelligentsia of the Slavs, who peopled almost half his realm, were already in ever-increasing numbers joining the camp of Masaryk, Pilsudski, and Trumbich, who were to build up a new and—as the experience of the last years has proved—none too happy Europe on the ruins of the venerable monarchy.

While I was a child I had only too many opportunities of watching the gradual dying-down of the universal German idea which had still been cultivated in Austria. I, and with me millions of my German and non-German compatriots, still cherished an artless belief in the attractiveness and natural superiority of our own particular German culture, which had no need to advertise itself or exercise pressure. As a child I had an idea that a non-German inhabitant of Austria must automatically rise to the dignity of being German as soon as he had attained a certain grade of education and hoped to attain a still higher one. I cannot remember how I got this idea into my head, but I know that I never doubted its validity.

I remember how I once spent the Whitsun holidays with my parents in a large country house in Moravia. We travelled north through the friendly landscape of Lower Austria and passed the strangely shaped Staats mountain that rises so abruptly out of the surrounding plain. Then the Pollau hills suddenly emerged from a tenuous blue mist. A mysterious radiance shone from the summit of one of these hills. It appeared to me then as very wonderful and strange. It was probably caused by the reflection of the sun from the roof of a chapel, which is perched on the height. I cannot explain it, but at that moment I was seized by an overwhelming longing to journey far, far away and never to return—and my long dormant desire to go to sea was actually born then.

We got out of the train in a little Moravian village and were driven in an open victoria through the pleasant, hilly land-

scape. We passed through friendly villages whose low houses were distempered in bright colours according to the Slav custom, for even to-day the Czech and Polish peasants repaint the outside of their cottages every Easter. At last we arrived at the manor house, which lay in a large park surrounded by century-old trees, and the carriage rolled through the porch into the court-yard.

Unfortunately, I could not enjoy the pleasures of country life long, as I was put to bed with some children's complaint. I had fever, and my parents sent for the local doctor, who also attended the other inhabitants of the château. He was a nice, middle-aged man with a beard—in those days the attribute of every self-respecting practitioner. He examined me and took my pulse and finally diagnosed measles. My temperature had been steadily mounting, and I saw everything in a dim, blurred fashion. I must have talked disconnectedly, for I remember my mother saying: "He is already delirious." My parents and the nice doctor sat down at a table, which was lit by a paraffin lamp, the doctor wrote out a prescription, and they carried on a conversation in low tones. Soon it veered off from medical subjects and took a political turn. I could only hear fragmentary sentences, that did not penetrate into my consciousness. Suddenly I heard the doctor say, in slightly raised tones: "Sir, I am a convinced member of the Young Czech Party, and so——"

I could not hear the remainder, but the interrupted sentence gave me much food for thought that evening, in spite of my complaint. How can it be possible, I said to myself, that a doctor, an educated man, who had just been writing out a Latin prescription, should firmly declare—as though it were quite a natural thing—that he is a Czech? I must confess that in a confused way I felt ashamed for the man. For several days I kept on thinking about it; I had a dark premonition that a new world was in the making which in some way threatened my own. Then other impressions came, and I forgot the little scene. I did not think of it again till many years later, when my world collided with that other one and finally submerged.

I have only dwelt on this episode because it seems to me to be very characteristic of the mental atmosphere in which

I grew up. It was the world of an Austrian officer's child, whose family moved from place to place within the Monarchy. The child was brought into contact with all the different nations and yet remained in his accustomed German-Austrian surroundings, to which the old Army formed the unchanging background. It seemed quite natural to us children that we should live among a population that spoke another language to ours. But it was equally natural that the officers who came to our house should speak German, no matter what their nationality. Whether we happened to be in a Czech or a Polish or a Croatian or an Italian district, we remained at home. When I was five my father was transferred from the ancient cathedral town of Olmuetz to Tarnow in Western Galicia, and became Colonel of the Second Uhlands, the regiment that was named after Prince Philip Schwarzenberg, who had led the allied armies at the battle of Leipzig. At that time Tarnow was a small, rather neglected Polish town, inhabited in the west and the centre by Poles, in the eastern portion by Jews. Jews and Poles, though not exactly enemies, were absolutely strangers to each other. They lived on two different planets. This condition, very peculiar to Central Europe at that time, was caused not only by differences in religion, customs, and ideas, but also by the fact that the Jews still refused to speak Polish, and held fast to their strange dialect, derived from the Middle High Dutch, which is known as Yiddish.

My parents were very hospitable, and we saw many visitors. Naturally, the majority of these were officers of the regiment, many of whom were the descendants of great Austrian and Polish families. Then there were some officials of the local government, who were all Poles, and the Polish gentry of the neighbourhood.

At that time these three classes represented the old Austria. Among all the hundreds of people who came to our house, I never heard a single adverse criticism of the Austrian State or its Ruler. The Conservative Polish county-families protested an especial reverence for the House of Habsburg, although they sometimes complained of members of their own class who thought differently. The latter, however, appeared to be a small and unimportant minority. In those days the Polish landed proprietors were looked upon as

a pillar of the State, and from their ranks came the most die-hard Conservatives in the Upper House and the Reichsrat.

At about that time the Polish Conservative Party, the so-called *Stanczyks*, had sent an address to the Emperor Francis Joseph comparing itself to the ivy, clinging to the throne of the Habsburgs. These Polish Tories had little sympathy with the striving *bourgeoisie* of their country, or with the peasantry which was fighting against heavy odds to improve their economic position.

I remember how my father and a Polish friend of our family took me driving across country in a dog-cart. The friend was old Count Stadnicki, a wealthy landowner and also a member of the Austrian Upper House. As my father was wearing his uniform, all the peasants recognized him and bowed deeply as we passed. We also passed a village with the name Wierchoslawice, which even Slav tongues have difficulty in pronouncing. We saw a tall peasant with high boots standing in front of a cottage ; like the others he pulled off his cap as we passed. Count Stadnicki suddenly turned purple in the face ; pointing at the peasant, he said to my father in his impulsive way : " Do you know who that fellow is, who just took off his cap to us ? That is a certain Witos, not an ordinary peasant at all, but a dangerous agitator who goes round stirring up the entire country-side against the landed proprietors. You ought to have the man shot down by your Uhlans."

This 'certain Witos' was Minister, then President of Poland and chief of the National Government twenty years later when the Bolshevists were routed by the Polish Army at the so-called 'miracle of the Vistula.' Six years later he was again elected President, but this time his glory lasted only a week and ended with his arrest by Pilsudski's officers in the courtyard of Wilanow. To-day he is an emigrant and lives in Czechoslovakia, which he seems to think safer than his Fatherland, where he has already served a term in the fortress of Brest-Litowsk. It is superfluous to mention that my father's Uhlans, even in those days of 'Habsburg tyranny over the small nations,' never hurt a hair of his head.

The Schwarzenberg Uhlans were looked upon as one of the finest cavalry regiments of the old army. Men and

N.C.O.s idolized my father, who had the quality so necessary for one who commanded Slavs, and especially Poles, of mixing severity and kindness in the right proportions. I would like to point out by the way that this same quality was the basis of Pilsudski's unparalleled popularity. My father succeeded in creating a position for himself both in the Army and in the Polish parts of Austria, which decided Emperor Charles to make him Governor of Galicia. Even to-day I can visualize my father at regimental parades, sitting on his charger and speaking to the assembled troops in clumsy but expressive Polish. His ringing voice was heard all over the parade-ground. When he had finished, Prince Sanguszko of Gumniska, the scion of one of Poland's most ancient families, who had watched the parade, rode up to him and said : " I wonder whether you noticed how adoringly your Uhlans gazed at you ! They would let themselves be cut into little pieces for you. This is really an argument against Poland, for these Masurians would never respect you as they do if you didn't happen to be a German."

Every year we spent the summer months in Austria's lake district, where we had a country house near Gmunden. We always moved with mountains of luggage and a train of servants ; it was like an expedition, and we children were thrilled by it every time. We considered Gmunden the best place on earth, for there we were always making excursions in the forest, rowing on the lake or climbing mountains. Sometimes we would also walk along the 'Esplanade,' a walk shaded by chestnut trees that led along the shores of the lake into the town.

Next to Ischl, Gmunden was in those days the most popular and crowded summer resort of the Alpine countries. Everybody who wanted to see and be seen flocked on to the 'Esplanade,' and the life there was typical of the time, the climax of *bourgeois* development. There were battles of flowers, lotteries, charity concerts, and dances. It was a kind of Austrian Homburg, where royalty and aristocracy foregathered. On one hill resided Queen Marie of Hanover, who had lost her throne in 1866 and had lived in Austria ever since. She was a kind old lady with white hair who occasionally gave us children sweets.

On the next hill her son, Duke Ernest Augustus of

Cumberland, had built a massive castle, which was looked upon in the country-side, for some unfathomable reason, as being representative of English architecture. Duke Ernest lived here with his wife, Duchess Thyra, who was a sister of Queen Alexandra and of the Tsarina. At half an hour's distance Duke Philip of Württemberg had built himself a summer residence in the style beloved by the manufacturers of *Ankers Steinbaukasten* with the obligatory keep and balcony. A stone's throw away there was a fourth court, that of Don Alfonso de Bourbon, the Carlist Pretender to the throne of Spain. All these minor courts were liberally furnished with chamberlains and ladies-in-waiting, most of all the Hanovers, who had built up a veritable hierarchy of courtiers from the ranks of the Guelph nobility. It is only natural that Gmunden society had more of its share of the social round, although the *train de vie* was a simple one.

Sometimes Emperor Francis Joseph would drive over in his carriage from Ischl. He always retained a strong dislike to the new-fangled motor car, and only once, when King Edward VII visited him in Ischl, did he consent to use it for the sake of his guest. When the Emperor came the town was always decorated with flags—black and yellow, red and white, and a few black, red, and gold ones. The latter invariably annoyed the Emperor, because the black, red, and gold colours were the symbol of a united Germany and Austria under Hohenzollern auspices.

The general tenor of life had the result that our house was always filled to overflowing with visitors. This pleased our incomparable chef, as it gave him ever-renewed opportunities to 'cover himself with glory'—a phrase beloved by bellicose German schoolmasters. His art was such that it even overshadowed that of the famous Frau Sacher.

Alas, he has taken the secret of his feather-weight *purée* of potatoes with him to his grave. I think even the famous chefs who cook for the Paris *club des cents*, the most distinguished centre of gastronomers, could not rival him in the preparation of this so apparently simple a dish.

Needless to say this excellent man, who belonged to the now almost extinct species of servants who spend their lives serving one family with utter devotion, was a native

of Bohemia. His German was as original as his culinary powers. Moreover, he was a true fanatic with respect to his profession. Once he had been ill and had spent his convalescence in Venice. My father asked him how he had liked it. His never-to-be-forgotten answer was : " Please, sir, they have very fine chickens on the market." Verbatim, for those who can appreciate German : " San sich, bitt schoen Herr Graf, sehr schoene Hendl'n dort am Markt."

Like many people of his type, he had an acute faculty for distinguishing between true and bogus distinction. Once when we came home he reported Prince X had called and left his card. While he was speaking our chef could not entirely hide a smile. We pressed him to tell us the reason of his amusement, and after much humming and hawing he replied : " Please, *Herr Graf*, I did not recognize His Highness, so I said to him, '*Herr Graf*, my masters are not at home.' Then His Highness puts himself in position and says : ' I'm not a Count, I'm a Prince.' Please, I've never heard anything like that from real quality."

From Tarnow we were transferred to Vienna, where I attended the ancient Schotten Gymnasium for four years. This famous public school was founded by Benedictines who came from Scotland in the Middle Ages. (It has now been suspended by Hitler.) When I had gone through the first four classes which constitute the so-called 'Untergymnasium,' I begged my parents to take me to Fiume, where I passed my entrance examination and entered the Imperial and Royal Naval Academy.

I shall never forget the moment when our train, coming from Zagreb, had traversed the crest of the Croatian hills and we suddenly saw the blue radiance of the Adriatic at our feet—the Gulf of Quarnero surrounded by the coast of Istria and a chaplet of islands. I was deeply moved to think I was to spend the future years of my life here, on this enchanting coast—so beautiful and yet so strange. At that time I did not know that the Mediterranean was to become my true home—a home I was to lose again after a few years, but which I shall regret as long as I live.

' Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,  
Luxe, calme et volupté.'

A white ship brought us to Venice and we spent a few weeks on the Lido. There were crowds of Italian relations and friends of ours from every country on earth, and also a Hungarian Secretary of State. In spite of my youth, the latter succeeded in getting on my nerves to an unbelievable extent with his ridiculous remarks, like, "I hope you are really keen on your new profession," and similar patronizing impertinences with which some adults are wont to aggravate children. Although my naval experience was only that of a fortnight, I could not but feel surprised that he should consider a perfect knowledge of the Hungarian language as the true foundation for success in the Navy.

"Learn Hungarian, mind you learn Hungarian," he said when we parted, and shook his index finger warningly against the blue sky of Italy.

## CHAPTER TWO

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### TEN YEARS IN THE NAVY

**I** NEVER REGRETTED MY early decision to become a naval officer. The Naval Academy at Fiume was assuredly a hard school ; the utmost was expected of the pupils, both mentally and physically, yet I know no better system of education for forming the character. The greatest importance was ascribed to the spirit of comradeship and absolute solidarity. Whoever broke this unwritten law was ostracized and had to leave the school. Tale-telling of any kind was quite unknown among us, and nothing could destroy the loyalty towards the different 'grades.'

An instance will illustrate how far this went. One night a cadet in my 'grade' had escaped from the Academy in order to go to a fancy dress ball in the town. When he came home in the early hours of the morning, while it was still pitch dark, and was just climbing over the high stone wall that surrounded the building, the Petty Officer on guard discovered him and laid hands on him. The cadet knocked him down and disappeared in the darkness. He then managed, by climbing the lightning conductor, to reach the dormitory where he slept with his class-mates. The Petty Officer, who was just regaining consciousness, could only discern a shadowy form getting in through the window, and was unable to identify the culprit.

On the next day there was great excitement. Our 'term' held a meeting and the wrongdoer immediately owned up. As bad luck would have it he had already been given a warning for some former peccadillo. According to the Draconic laws then in force, he would have been sent down

without question if a second misdeed of his came to light. We hastily reached the decision that he was not to report and instead the entire class would bear the consequences. At 10 a.m. we were told to parade, our term-lieutenant, von Hahn, who stood *in loco parentis* to us during the four years of our training, appeared frowning ominously. He cried : " A most disgraceful thing has happened. One of the pupils in this term slipped out during the night, probably in order to sleep with a woman, and when he returned he knocked down the Petty Officer on duty. The culprit is to report immediately and then he will have to defend himself before the Admiral. I order the culprit to take two steps forward ! "

The entire class advanced two paces.

" As you were. What nonsense is this ? You all know my point of view. If one of you is not afraid to get into trouble, he must have the courage to face the music." Once more : " The culprit two steps forward ! " The result was exactly the same. " Head of the division ! Who disobeyed orders last night ? " The answer was : " The whole term." " All right, I will report to the Admiral that prospective officers refuse to obey orders and are in a state of mutiny." The Admiral who was in command of the Naval Academy foamed with rage when he heard of our stubbornness and confined the entire term to barracks. We were not allowed to play football or tennis and our Sunday leave was stopped. The latter punishment was especially painful for those whose people lived in the town or nearby.

It was rumoured that the Christmas holidays, which were due in a few weeks time, were to be stopped. At the same time we were told that these punishments would be immediately rescinded if we abandoned our incredible obstinacy. Weeks passed in this fashion, but nothing could shake our loyalty. It is worth mentioning that the boy who was the cause of all the trouble never heard a word of reproach. At last, on 21 December, the Admiral gave way and allowed us to go to our homes—probably as a result of letters from infuriated parents.

Soon afterwards the first ' punishment order ' against our comrade was erased, due to his ' exemplary behaviour.'

Some months later we were rowing to Abbazia, led by our term-lieutenant. Suddenly he said : " Now what was the real reason why the cadet who knocked down the Petty Officer did not come forward ? Who was it ? To-day you can own up without fear."

" It was I, sir."

" Well, why didn't you report guilty at the time ? You wouldn't have been killed for it."

" I was on remand, so I would have been sent down from the Academy."

" I see—now I understand. From a strictly military point of view you were wrong, of course, but if you had acted differently you would not have been my children of whom I am proud. I could no longer have been friends with you."

That is the method by which real men are brought up. The cadets hailed from every part of the Monarchy. All nations and all classes were represented and so they found a faithful reflection of the motley realm of Habsburg. During the first few weeks or months there was a tendency among boys of the same nationality to keep to themselves, partly for the simple reason that some of them could hardly speak German. But this preliminary stage was soon left behind. Friendships were formed and soon nobody thought of their different origins. It was actually forgotten ; to the point that I myself could not tell to-day whether some of the comrades with whom I had shared everything during four years were of German, Croat, or Hungarian origin. I do not remember a single case where the question of nationality had been the cause of one of our frequent fights.

During the summer months we lived on board ship, so as to gain some practical experience for our future profession. After the first year we cruised through the enchanting islands of Dalmatia on board the ancient cruiser *Zara*, which dated from the seventies of the last century. She was said to go astern faster than she could go ahead. The bell which was struck every half-hour was engraved with the legend : ' Imperial Sea Arsenal Venice.' It reminded me of the stories my father used to tell of the days when he was rowed down the Grand Canal in a State gondola draped in yellow and black, while the Austrian military bands played on the Piazzetta.

During the next two summers we cruised in a rather more modern cruiser to the most beautiful spots of the Eastern and Western Mediterranean. An unforgettable experience was our cruise through the Greek islands which took us as far as Beyrouth and Alexandria. I can still see in my mind's eye eighty hopeful cadets in their smart uniforms trotting on eighty donkeys, followed by yelling donkey-boys, through the Sahara on a terrifically hot day to visit the Pyramids and the Tombs of the Kings. So as to make us liberal with 'baksheesh' the Arab kept shouting in German: "Gute Isel—gute Isel—Bismarck—Isel, Wilhelm—Isel!" (Good ass, Bismarck—ass, Wilhelm—ass.) Another turned a somersault and shouted: "Kaiser Wilhelm lebe hock!" As may be remembered the German Emperor had declared himself the protector of the Arabian realm, and therefore he enjoyed a certain popularity in Egypt. I have not visited Egypt recently, so I cannot record whether the contemporary protectors of the Arabs have a similar power of inspiring Egyptian donkey-boys.

My four years at the Naval Academy were soon over. On 19 June 1912 we stood with thumping hearts on the deck of a cruiser anchored at Fiume and swore our oath of allegiance to the red-white-red flag that floated bravely in the brilliant sunshine. Not one of us would have believed that six years later that same flag would disappear from the seven seas. We were so happy and proud that day; we were full-fledged midshipmen and the future was open to us. We all assembled for the last time to bid our beloved term-Lieutenant farewell. He had tears in his eyes as he wrung our hands. Then we went into the world.

That autumn I shipped on the new battleship of the dreadnought class, *Viribus Unitis*, which was being commissioned for the first time at Pola, the chief port of the Austrian Navy. Pola had been an obscure fishing village up to the forties of the last century, but it was then a flourishing town. The inhabitants were mostly Italians, but, like Kiel, Portsmouth, or Toulon, it took its character from the Navy.

Austria's naval officers formed an interesting community. They were the representatives of a continental state with a single seaboard in the south, and so their true home became

the Mediterranean. Alexandria, Smyrna, or Salonika were much more real to them than Vienna or Budapest—many of them had never visited either of the capitals. They were, in a manner of speaking, the last echo of the ancient German drive to the south. They did not care for conventions, and they were singularly free from prejudice. In the Service there was perfect discipline, but militarism as an aim in itself was scorned. Liberty of opinion and the principles of the individual were invariably respected. Every eccentricity was accepted as a matter of course, so long as it did not interfere with routine. One young officer, for instance, suddenly took it into his head that Islam was a finer religion than his own. He left the Roman Catholic Church and turned Mohammedan, appearing on parade with a red fez as his new faith prescribed. A few harmless jests were made about it, but that was all.

The Navy was a collection of genuine ‘characters.’ One spent his free time studying Arabic literature, another devoted himself to Chinese philosophy, a third painted flower pieces, a fourth collected games from the Far East, and was always trying to find disciples for Chinese chess and ‘Go’; yet another had the ambition to become a perfect conjurer, and one actually studied the languages of the Negroes. Assuredly the life between water and steel, the enforced periods of solitude, and of many months without the society of the opposite sex, is not natural, and so, coupled with the influence of the Southern sun, these circumstances bred the aberrations from the uninteresting type we are wont to describe as normal.

The relation between officers and men was exemplary, although verbal communication was not too easy, and often made great demands on our linguistic abilities. All the officers had to speak German, Italian, and Croatian, as well as French and English for international relations. Many also had command of Hungarian and a second Slav language. Next to German, Italian was the official language used by the men—probably by reason of the Venetian heritage of the Austrian Navy. But in spite of this Babel of tongues the spirit that animated us was that of Admiral von Tegethoff, who attacked an Italian fleet twice as numerous as his own at Lissa, while his Austrian sailors gave their battle-cry in

Italian : " Eviva l'Austria, eviva l'Imperatore ! Abasso l'Italia !" (" Long live Austria, long live the Emperor ! Down with Italy ! ")

I soon fell for the fascination of this unique atmosphere, which united the isolated community of Austrian naval officers. An added charm was the beauty of the Istrian and Dalmatian landscapes. At times we may have accepted it as a matter of course, but whenever we were away for any length of time, we would miss it sorely.

During the five years I spent at the Naval Academy I felt I was going home when I travelled north of Fiume, but later I had the feeling of homecoming when, leaving Inner Austria for the south, I had passed the Alps and saw my beloved Mediterranean shining below me.

The commissioning of our ship was speeded up, as the whole Fleet had to be in readiness owing to the war in the Balkans and the resulting crisis. But war was not to come yet. Two more years of peace ensued. As she was the first dreadnought of the Austrian Navy, the *Viribus Unitis* was flagship of the Fleet, and Admiral Anton Haus, who became Commander-in-Chief during the Great War, flew his flag in our ship. Admiral Haus was an interesting character. He was a brilliant officer, and an excellent tactician. He despised mankind generally and yet loved young people. He was a faithful servant of the Austrian State, and yet he would criticize Austrian institutions most mercilessly. He was utterly loyal to the House of Habsburg, yet in personal dealings with members of the Imperial Family he would behave with a nonchalance that made the courtiers' blood run cold. His authority in the Navy was unbounded, and we midshipmen idolized him—he was so thoroughly a man after our own hearts.

Later, during the War, Admiral Haus was to prove that he was really the great man we thought he was. For greatness of personality is primarily a faculty of standing above events and not allowing one's judgment to be influenced by transitory lines of thought. Many a man is mentioned in history who, lifted out of his rut by blind fate, performed fateful deeds, and yet without ever attaining true greatness. Great men frequently work in silence, while the mountebanks fill the market-place with their shouts. Admiral

Anton Haus was one of those silent great men. The phrases, the vulgar slogans, that plunged humanity into the depths of intellectual night during the War could not touch him ; he was as impervious to them as the salamander to the flames.

A few months before his death—he died during the War—a town in Carniola wished to endow a scholarship at the Naval Academy, and requested the Admiral to allow this foundation to bear his name. The Admiral declined the honour in a courteous letter, explaining his refusal by pointing out that nobody could tell whether his name would still be welcomed after the end of the War.

Soon after the *Viribus Unitis* was commissioned the heir apparent, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, came on board for a few days in order to witness the manœuvres of the Fleet. I remember his rather thick-set figure, his square head, and his staring, fishlike eyes, that gazed at you with a peculiar immobility. The entire staff of the ship was presented to the Archduke. He talked to everyone most intensely and showed great knowledge of seamanship. I was honoured by a long conversation, as he had a great respect for my father, who had just been appointed General Inspector of the Austro-Hungarian cavalry. Francis Ferdinand, who, on the whole, was not a particularly amiable or pleasant character, was extremely popular with the Navy, for it was known that he wished to develop the strength of our Fleet.

Not so the Emperor Francis Joseph, who was definitely out of touch with the Navy, and only reluctantly inspected the Fleet. In the Austrian Navy it was said that this well-known attitude of the Emperor was the result of a tragic incident which occurred during the early years of his reign. In the fifties of the last century the Emperor, still a youth, happened to be in Venice, and he commanded the captain of the naval paddle-steamer *Maria Anna* to sail to Trieste. The weather was bad, with very heavy seas, and the captain considered it his duty to warn the young Emperor that this was a dangerous undertaking with a none too seaworthy vessel, such as the ancient *Maria Anna*. The Emperor had no experience whatever in seamanship ; he was shocked at hearing himself contradicted by an officer, and he repeated his command in a brusque tone, having muttered under his breath, but just loud enough for the captain to hear it, the

word "Coward." The captain blanched, saluted, and went on board his ship and left the harbour. Before steaming out, however, he ordered the Imperial salute to be fired—but between each gun there was a longer pause than usual, so that it became the so-called death-salute. This was the only demonstration against the monarch in the annals of the Austrian Navy. The *Maria Anna* went down with all hands.

In the summer of 1913 the final decision had been fought out on the battle-fields of the Balkan peninsula, but the Great Powers, after endless and difficult conferences, had arrived at the lame compromise of erecting an independent principality of Albania and expelling Nikita of Montenegro from the North Albanian town, Skutari. At that time the *Viribus Unitis* was ordered to join the International Fleet which was concentrated off the northern coast of Albania. Thus we took part in the last action of the so-called European concert.

In the roadstead of Skutari, where the river Bojana flows into the sea, an Italian and an Austrian battleship division lay at anchor, also a French battle-cruiser, a British light cruiser, and the German cruiser *Breslau*, which was with the *Goeben* a year later to carry out the famous cruise from Taranto to the Dardanelles during the first days of the Great War. Even then Russia was not represented. From the castle of Skutari five flags flew side by side in the breeze : those of Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Austria-Hungary.

The sojourn by the deserted and wild Albanian coast was anything but stimulating, so the officers of the International Fleet attempted to pass the time by mutual entertainments. There was a very festive gala on board the *Breslau* in honour of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Kaiser Wilhelm's reign. Officers of all nations were invited, and all the guests were charmed when a bald and bearded French officer sang well-known Montmartre *chansons* to the guitar. The singer who honoured Kaiser Wilhelm in this original manner was Claude Farrère, the author of the then famous novel, *La Bataille*.

In the summer of 1914, a few weeks before the outbreak of the War, I was, after I had finished my studies in the training course for midshipmen at Pola, ordered to join the

cruiser *Szigetvar* and to sail for Albania once more. In the meanwhile the Prince of Wied had been established there as *Mbret*, which is Albanian for 'prince.' Under the protection of an Italian and Austrian cruiser, the Prince ruled a part of the country whose confines were exactly limited by the range of the cruisers' guns. Two and a half miles behind the capital of Durazzo the so-called front line began. Essad Pasha reigned over the remaining part of the country.

Quite extraordinary conditions prevailed in Valona, the second capital, where the *Mbret* exercised his nominal rule. Order was maintained by a few *chasseurs* who had been sent from Holland, but the real hero of the play was a Dutch physician, who enjoyed the confidence of the Prince and was admiring himself in the role of General. He caused two benches to be put up in front of the only inn, in the only street of Valona ; there he placed a few recruiting agents, who sat on the benches with a considerable pile of gold coins before them. The agents made impassioned speeches describing the advantages of a soldier's life in glowing colours to the natives who stood around. Those who consented to join up were made to scrawl three crosses under a printed form and in return were given a rifle and a gold coin. The latter circumstance is explained by the fact that Albanians were a peculiar people who, unlike more civilized men, actually preferred the heavy gold currency to the much more practical paper money. In this manner a few hundred men were enlisted.

The physician planned to make a daring flank attack northwards on Durazzo with them. There he would roll up Essad Pasha's troops and lay the liberated country at the feet of his Prince. This plan, worthy of a Hannibal, was unfortunately doomed to failure owing to the excessive individualism of the Albanians. About half the warriors deemed it opportune to leave Valona before the beginning of the campaign in order to attend to the customary business of a free man in the Albanian mountains with the rifles they had so easily acquired. The remaining soldiers somehow dispersed during the offensive so that the bellicose physician was forced to return, with a few faithful followers, to Valona after three days—a sadder and a wiser man.

In the midst of these farcical events which we had witnessed

without taking part in politics, the thunderbolt fell : Austria's ultimatum to Serbia—the cessation of diplomatic relations—the War. So we entered the historic period which is best described by the sinister jest of an anonymous Berliner who pasted up a bill on the door of the Foreign Office in the Wilhelmstrasse with the legend : ‘ Declarations of war are accepted here.’

I was far from realizing the full import of the tragic events at the time. I was a newly-fledged naval officer, and to me war meant the exercise of my profession and the opportunity to perform deeds of valour and earn decorations ; besides, I still believed in decisive battles, rapid victories, and the cessation of the Great War within a few months. We had entire confidence in the wisdom of the Government, and we never doubted Kaiser Wilhelm's prophecy that we would vanquish our enemies before the trees had shed their leaves. On the whole I had not much leisure to worry about this problem.

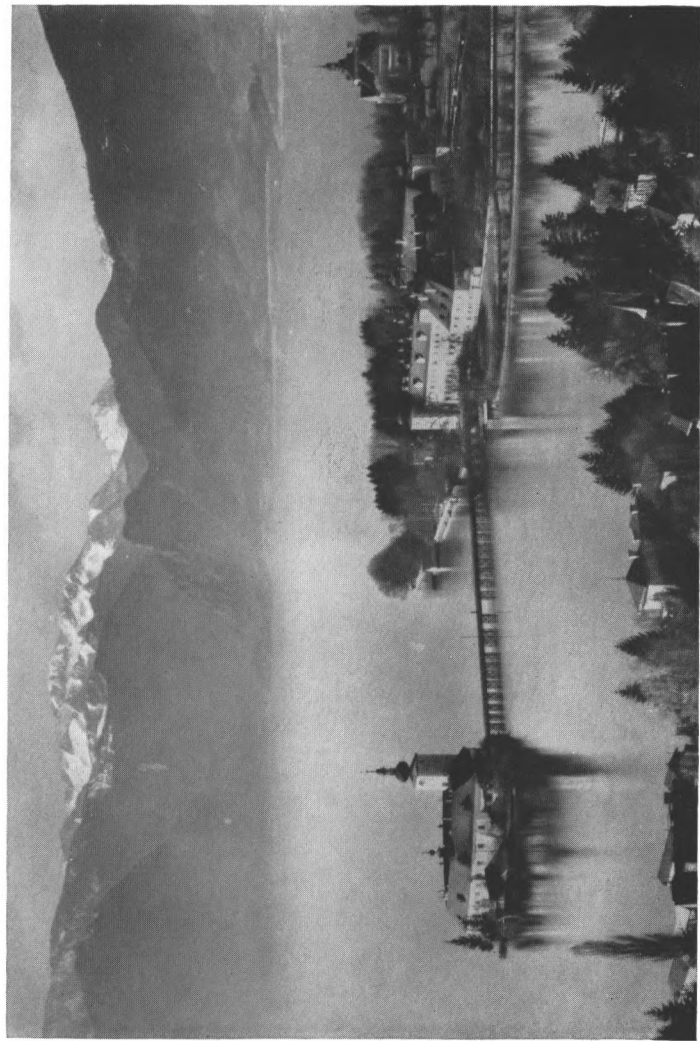
The guns were already thundering on the frontier of Austria and Serbia, but we were still lying at anchor in the Bay of Valona. Then we suddenly received orders to sail for Southern Dalmatia. I can still hear the parting words of our extremely friendly Italian comrades, “ *Au revoir* in Taranto.” Taranto was, with Spezia, the chief military port of Italy, and, according to the plans of the Triple Alliance, all the Austrian and German ships in the Mediterranean were to concentrate there and operate together with the Italian Fleet. It was to happen differently.

When we arrived in Cattaro I received orders to join the battleship *Babenberg* in Pola. The usually rather quiet harbour had become the centre of tremendous activity, as the entire Fleet was being fitted out in feverish haste. During the first weeks and months we had our hands full, as we had to prepare her for service, ship munitions and exercise our crew. The hegemony of the Austrian Navy in the Adriatic was not seriously questioned by the numerically far superior French Fleet, which was reinforced by units of the British Mediterranean Fleet, so we were able to complete our mobilization in peace, and had plenty of time to train the Navy. Up to the entry of Italy into the War the Adriatic remained an idyllic hinterland. From the strategical point of

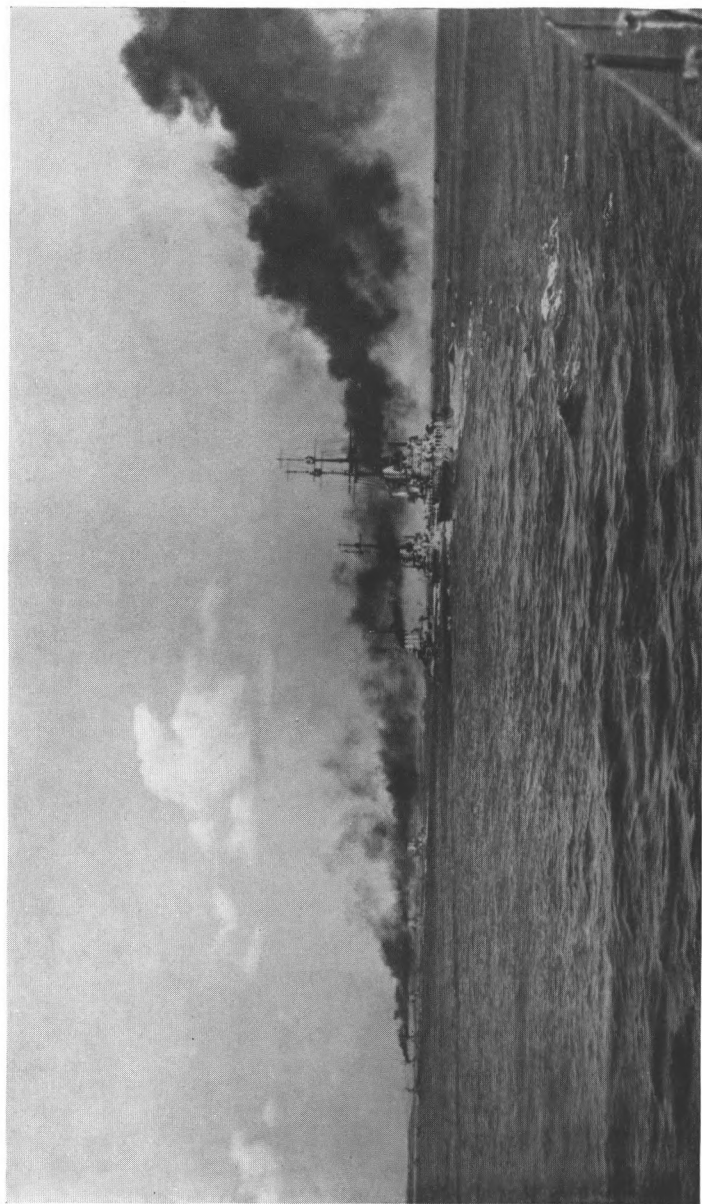
view it was to remain that until the end of the War. The decisions were fought out elsewhere.

The four divisions of battleships, the small cruisers, and most of the torpedo-boats, remained in Pola, and the fifth division, the armoured cruisers, and the remaining destroyers lay at anchor in the South Dalmatian Gulf of Cattaro. The men were longing to get to grips with the enemy, their morale was excellent. They could not understand why the Admiralty would not use the Fleet and kept it lying in port. But we officers knew that Admiral Haus had been reckoning with a declaration of war from Italy ever since August 1914. In the first hours of the War a squadron of Austrian battleships, consisting of the ships type *Viribus Unitis* and *Radetzky*, steamed south from Pola to pick up the German cruisers *Goeben* and *Breslau*, threatened by British men-of-war off Messina. Half-way to the Roads of Otranto the Fleet turned back, the High Command having received a report that the two German cruisers had escaped their pursuers by doubling on them and making for Greek waters and the Dardanelles. At the conference which preceded this trip Admiral Haus said to his captains : " We have no need to fear the Italians ; they will only declare war on us after a year. But it is the English who are worrying me. I just don't know if they are enemies or friends. We ought, of course, to ask Vienna, but they don't know any more than we do. The only thing left for me to do is to ask the English Admiral by wireless or flags whether or not we are allowed to fire at them." When these words were spoken, England, though at war with Germany, had not yet declared war upon Austria-Hungary.

Peace-time routine on board continued for months. By the middle of May we knew that Italy's participation in the War must be imminent, as we received orders to keep the ships cleared for action. When Italy at last declared war on Austria, Admiral Haus immediately set about carrying out the *coup* he had been preparing for months. As can well be imagined, the indignation at Italy's betrayal was especially hot in the Navy, which had always looked upon Italy as a potential enemy. Late in the afternoon the whole torpedo-flotilla, which was anchored in the inner harbour, steamed out. That day the feeling of Pola must have been



The Lake of Gmunden.



The Austrian Fleet after the bombardment of Ancona, May 1915.

the same as in 1866, when Tegethoff sailed for Lissa. The Italian population of the city, which always accompanied the departure of every ship with deafening shouts of "Eviva!" had come in their thousands to line the piers. On that day the Italian 'Irredenta' movement was certainly not in evidence. The battleships followed in the evening, setting their course for the coast of Italy. In the meantime we had learnt that Admiral Haus had thrown a complete network of torpedo-boats and cruisers across the Adriatic in order to protect the battleships. He intended to bombard the harbour of Ancona the next morning, and at the same time destroy the East Italian railway track in several places, so as to delay the mobilization of the Italian Army and the transport of the troops to the north.

So we steamed towards the enemy on a glorious night in May, and the sea was as calm as a pond. All night long I stood on deck enjoying the spectacle of the Fleet sailing along in the moonlight, protected by a great semicircle of torpedo-boats and cruisers. On board there was silence. In muffled tones men were talking about the possibility or probability for encounter with the Italian Fleet. But when I passed the air-shafts leading down to the boiler-rooms I could hear the cheers of the Croatian stokers, who kept shouting all night long. They were full of impatience to tackle the hated Italians, although, as they performed their laborious duties many feet under sea, they would have seen very little fighting. A few gunners from the Italian-speaking coastal districts spent the night by scratching all sorts of 'complimentary' phrases on the shells destined for the bombardment.

The entire manœuvre took place as though it had been a well-rehearsed peace-time exercise. The ships turned northwards at a given point and steamed slowly past Ancona, bombarding the strategically important points of the city. Admiral Haus' plan of interrupting the railway-line was also carried out, taking the Italians completely by surprise. The Fleet came back to harbour without having encountered a single Italian craft on the way. In Pola we were welcomed by the jubilation of the inhabitants, who had been watching on the hills surrounding the town, praying for the safe return of the ships.

After this the Fleet remained in harbour for many months.

I was glad when, in February 1916, I was transferred to the torpedo-destroyer *Turul*, which belonged to the flotilla stationed at Cattaro. Our hard and thankless task consisted in convoying the steamers which, coming from Trieste and Fiume, brought provisions and munitions to our troops then advancing into Albania. The commander of the *Turul* was none other than Herr von Hahn, our respected and beloved term-lieutenant at the Naval Academy.

The work was difficult and exhausting and made great demands on our knowledge of seamanship. Some times we steamed four or five nights a week to escort the little coastal steamers, commanded by helpless and often inadequate skippers, through the mine-fields, from Curzola through the Gulf of Cattaro to the Albanian ports. Now and then the torpedo-boats, led by small cruisers, would push forward into the region of Brindisi in order to waylay the chief enemies of our submarines, the enemy fishing-craft, who trailed up and down the Roads of Otranto with nets. However, our nocturnal patrols were rarely favoured by fortune.

During the last months of my appointment on board the *Turul* my commander was Captain Mayer, who was known in the Navy by the nickname 'Safety-match Mayer.' He had acquired this peculiar appellation when he was a midshipman during the Chinese Boxer rising, when the troops of the allied Great Powers advanced on Peking from Tientsin, in order to free the diplomatic missions who were encircled by Chinese. The Russians were in command of the expedition. Mayer was leading a detachment of sailors through a deserted and ruined village not far from Tientsin. There, in a hut which was partially burnt down, a sailor discovered a cage containing a many-coloured live parrot. The man asked permission to take the parrot along—which Mayer naturally granted as the poor bird would otherwise have perished. And so the men marched cheerfully on with the swaying cage in their midst. Suddenly in a cloud of dust, a Russian cavalry-patrol came up at a gallop, led by a young and arrogant officer. The latter pulled up at the sight of this rather unmilitary-looking convoy and asked the Austrian midshipman in haughty and staccato German where the devil the sailor had got the parrot.

Surely he must know that the High Command had strictly forbidden looting. Mayer answered nonchalantly that he had given permission to the sailor to take the bird, and that he was prepared to take the responsibility with his superiors. The Russian officer, infuriated by this cool answer, yelled at him: "Don't you know to whom you are speaking? I am Prince Jaime de Bourbon, and my mother is an Archduchess of Austria!" "And I am midshipman Mayer, and my aunt has a safety-match factory in Linz," was the appropriate though impertinent reply, which cost Mayer six weeks' leave, but earned him a certain local fame.

At the end of 1917 I left the sea, being appointed to the Ministry of Marine at Vienna. I was never to see the red-white-red flag floating from a mast again. No—once more I was to see the old flag, twenty years later; in October 1937 at Budapest at the inauguration of the monument to Hungary's fallen seamen. On that glorious autumn morning the ensign of the *Viribus Unitis*, on board which Horthy had served as Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet, flew from a mast that had been erected on the bank of the Danube. Around it were great stands filled with former Austrian and Hungarian seamen who had come from all parts of the shattered realm. In the foreground stood Miklos von Horthy, the last Commander of the Fleet, now Regent of Hungary. I was reminded of a conversation which had taken place a few weeks after the outbreak of the War in the Marine Casino at Pola. A few of us, among them Horthy, were discussing the scant chances of surviving the struggle against such an overwhelming enemy majority. Suddenly Horthy in his impulsive way exclaimed: "Oh, I'm not worried about the future. We Horthys are all born under a lucky star. My grandfather and my father both had luck, and I am convinced that I, too, will be fortunate."

At that time Horthy was only an unknown commander of a small Austrian battleship, which was named after the family to which he was to owe so much, *Habsburg*. Three years later, when he was still a comparatively young man, the last ruler of the line of Habsburg conferred on him the title of Supreme Head of the Fleet. On the day I am

speaking of, the septuagenarian, as head of the State, stood beside me once more, bowing to the acclamations of his people.

The covering fell away from the monument and revealed, sculptured in stone, the bows of the *Novara*, his *Novara*, the ship in which Horthy had laid the foundation of his fame as sailor and soldier in the victorious naval engagement of Otranto. The monitors anchored in the Danube fired the salute, the familiar strains of Koerner's 'Prayer before Battle,' which was played each evening in the flagships, sounded once more, and for the last time the red-white-red flag was slowly struck. To us, who had sworn fealty to these colours, it was a deeply moving moment, and we were not ashamed of the tears which ran down our cheeks. Only then—in Budapest, did we finally bury our Navy.

## CHAPTER THREE

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### THE COLLAPSE

IN THE LATE SUMMER of 1915 I was already aware of the fact that the Central Powers could not possibly win the War. I returned to Vienna for the first time on home-leave and I found a changed city. The fatal combination of war, patriotism, commerce, and unbridled love of pleasure had set its seal on the formerly distinguished and charming capital. Many of the best men of the time had fallen on the battle-fields, others were doing their duty in the front lines, but the unscrupulous were collecting huge fortunes and indulging in a shameless display of unheard-of luxury.

The shop windows were filled with objects in the worst possible taste, designed to glorify the War. On the most unlikely objects the pictures of the Allied Monarchs were to be found, framed with inspiring slogans dedicated to 'the brave boys out there.' I have never met a single one of these 'brave boys' who did not turn away in horror from the productions of this commercialized patriotism. So the real purpose of these war-ashtrays, and sheets woven with portraits of generals must have been to inspire the courage and strengthen the endurance of the stay-at-home heroes.

The theatres and night clubs were crammed with war profiteers, *Schieber* (illegal dealers in foodstuffs), amorous wives whose husbands were at the front, and officers who, filled with a desperate lust for pleasure, were attempting to extract the maximum of sensual enjoyment out of the few days of their leave. The most successful plays were those which glorified patriotism in an almost grotesque

manner such as *The Kings*, by Hans Müller, a dramatic fabrication abounding in clichés, which to-day is deservedly forgotten. The theatres that usually catered for more frivolous tastes presented an even more poisonous combination of patriotism and cant. I have always had a horror of patriotic demonstrators or demonstrations in the wrong place, and when it is made a 'draw' for a *boîte de nuit* it becomes absolutely revolting. More than once I have left such places where comedians and show-girls, hung round with patriotic symbols, roused the heroic and warlike feelings of obese profiteers in tune with the spirit of the times. I can also remember a garden fête arranged by a Princess who was then very popular in Vienna, the proceeds of which were to be devoted to the widows and orphans of soldiers. The star turn of the fête was a boy of eight years dressed in a field-grey uniform, who, in a shrill childish treble, piped a war song reeking with false sentimentality and sham heroics. It must have made every real soldier feel sick.

I fled to the concert halls, but even there one was not safe from 'inspired' art.

As bad luck would have it I was forced to listen to a War Overture by Weingartner, in which the expected victory of the Central Powers was foreshadowed by the device of travestying the Marseillaise and the national anthems of our other enemies until the Austrian anthem and the 'Wacht am Rhein' broke through triumphantly and drowned the others. Later in 1919 Weingartner composed a revolutionary hymn.

It was with a feeling of profound disappointment that I left the capital and went to visit my parents in Upper Austria. There, at last, I was able to breathe pure air again. My father and I went for a walk along the sunny slopes that led down to the Traunsee to the south, and there, I remember, we discussed the political and military situation of the Central Powers. My father remarked very appositely that the slogan 'to stand fast' might be all very well for the strong, but not for the weak, who must attempt to end the War as rapidly as possible by energetic attacks and superior organization. 'To stand fast' simply meant that the party who commanded the greater resources must win. There could be no doubt about it that that party was the

Entente, who, thanks to Great Britain, ruled the seas and thus had access to the raw materials of the world. My father prophesied correctly that lack of material and men, and actual lack of food would end the Great War to the detriment of the Central Powers, who were, from a strategical point of view, in the same position as a beleaguered fortress.

I was deeply concerned about the future fate of my country when I returned to the naval base. I did not come home to the hinterland again until 1916. During that time I had undergone a mental transformation. During the quiet and monotonous months I spent in the *Babenberg*, I devoted my ample leisure to the study of German, French, and Asiatic philosophy, and all the philosophers taught me that war is an act of destruction unworthy of mankind. The saying of an ancient sage quoted by Kant in his immortal essay on eternal peace made an indelible impression on my mind. It runs something like this: War is detestable for the reason that it creates more evil men than it destroys.

If this was already the case in bygone times, when only a fraction of the population went to war and the weapons of destruction were still primitive, how much more so must it be to-day, where general conscription drove the entire manhood of nations to slaughter each other with weapons of diabolical efficiency. I burned with indignation at the mechanical methods of warfare, where loss of human lives was taken into account as though they were simply spare parts of a machine. The horrible shambles of Verdun, where the flower of the German and the French nation was ruthlessly sacrificed in order to win a few positions, appeared to me so senselessly inhuman that I lost all confidence in the leadership of the European states who could use such ghastly methods to attain their aims. Only a century earlier Clausewitz was able to say that war was the continuation of politics with different means. The Great War convinced me that he could never have written that aphorism if he had lived in our time. Then—and to-day even more so—war appears to me as the ultimate failure of politics, the surest sign of the moral bankruptcy of inadequate leadership. War has destroyed war and made it incapable of being the means of attaining any reasonable

purpose. I recognized clearly that war wastes more substance than even the victor can ever hope to win back. Humanly war is barbarous, politically devoid of sense, and economically a dead loss.

The more convinced I became of the truth of these reflections, the less I was able to understand why the leading statesmen of the world should persist in rushing along the path to certain destruction, instead of calling a halt to this senseless slaughter. But I soon gave up hope that any sensible action would be inspired from those quarters. The slogans that the politicians gave out to cheer struggling humanity rang more and more hollow; 'war to end war,' '*nous les aurons*,' 'our place in the sun,' 'the strengthening steel bath of war,' and so forth *ad infinitum*. In the radical state of mind I was in at the time I could only assume that the responsible leaders must be either unscrupulous criminals or simple-minded dupes of their own slogans, or demagogues who underrated the intelligence of their struggling suffering peoples. The future taught me that, with few exceptions, they represented an unfortunate combination of these three elements. The heap of ruins which we call Europe to-day is the result of their dastardly actions and cowardly omissions.

In autumn 1916, after I had spent a few days in Vienna, I had to realize that the State was creaking in all its hinges. Signs of moral decay, political dissolution, and disintegration were visible at every turn, selfishness, greed, and lust of gain were terribly in evidence—but the inner fibre of the country was still sound. Millions did their duty uncomplainingly though with despair in their hearts, hoping to save the ancient Habsburg realm.

When the first rumours went round that the Emperor Francis Joseph was gravely ill, many people would not take them seriously. The Emperor had become almost a myth to be taken for granted. The oldest men could not remember having been ruled by another monarch. It seemed incredible that he should be subject to the law of mortality. But his time had run its course. Perhaps it was as well that it should have come thus and that he, who had seen the glory and splendour of his realm, he who had presided at Frankfurt over the confederation of German Princes,

should not live to see the day when this same realm was to be irrevocably destroyed.

The era he had represented embraced the period beginning before 1848 until the Great War, an epoch which brought the countries of the Danube basin expansion and prosperity and a development of the middle classes which did not obviate the feudal traditions. It ended on the day when the old Emperor was borne to his last resting-place. A ghostly funeral procession accompanied by torchbearers wended its way from Schoenbrunn to the Hofburg, where the Emperor's mortal remains were placed before they were finally interred in the Capucin vault. Once again the old realm unfolded the pomp of its ancient Spanish ceremonial. All we who stood in silence with bared heads along the route knew that this was the end of an epoch, not merely the last act of a reign that had outlasted more than two generations of men.

The Emperor is dead, long live the Emperor. Thus it had ever been. But the cheers that greeted the new ruler were already faint. The War was becoming more and more oppressive, the situation of the Central Powers more hopeless from day to day, and Austria's faith in the future of the State was being steadily sapped. The Emperor Charles was hardly known to his people, for until the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand he had led an almost anonymous existence. In the two years that followed, from July 1914 until he came to the throne, the War was raging and circumstances made it impossible to change this.

The Emperor Charles had many good and sympathetic qualities, which made him what he was—a likeable personality. But these very qualities which would have been highly praiseworthy in a private individual, were dangerous ones in a ruler. He was kindly, gentle, and conciliatory, extremely impulsive, and attached to his former friends. This last fact led to a series of mistakes in the awarding of the highest posts in the Government which hastened the dissolution of the realm. Disaster and irrevocable ruin approached with ever-increasing rapidity. It is improbable that even a greater man than he could have succeeded in steering the Habsburg realm safely through the reefs during the few months that remained before it was to

collapse. At that time the two Emperors were no longer in command—the sole dictator was General Ludendorff, despite his many faults a great and inspired general, but a narrow-minded and obstinate politician. The decisions on the fate of Austria-Hungary were no longer made in Vienna or Budapest, but in the German Headquarters—for worse, not for better !

In the meantime my father had been nominated Governor of Galicia. He was chosen because of his thorough knowledge of this large country, in which he had spent thirty years of his life, and also because he was equally popular with Poles and Ukrainians. He was set an almost impossible task—to keep the peace between four million Poles and as many Ukrainians, who hated each other with an insatiable hatred. It was impossible to stifle restlessness and discontent among a population for which there was no longer sufficient food. Besides, it was out of the question to bring about the so-called Austro-Polish solution, i.e. a personal union of Austria and Poland under the Habsburg Crown, as long as an amateurish foreign policy missed no occasion of giving offence to the Poles. When my father took over his post at the beginning of 1917, he found that the majority of the population was still loyal to the House of Habsburg, in spite of the suffering and want occasioned by war.

My father soon succeeded in establishing his position very firmly, but unfortunately as his personal authority increased that of the State diminished. Only too frequently he was forced to enter into compromises which were contrary to his principles, and he had to have recourse to ingenious methods in order to keep up at least a semblance of the wavering governmental authority. From day to day, all over the country, strikes would break out among the poverty-stricken and undernourished population—occurrences which appeared fully comprehensible from the humanitarian point of view, but had to be suppressed in consideration of the necessities of war. It was no longer possible to give the working-classes even the minimum of bread and fat which they demanded.

It was characteristic of the terrible conditions which prevailed in Galicia at that time that on one occasion my

father, to save an entire town from starvation, had to buy several trucks of flour from a sergeant. The latter, of course, had simply stolen the flour from some military depot. I remember my father saying with a bitter smile, that he was under no delusions, and knew very well that the man had not saved the flour from his daily rations—but the most important thing in times like these was to feed the poor devils in the cities.

Another time a strike had broken out in a munition factory near Cracow which was worked almost exclusively by women. The reason of the strike was insufficient food. The women demanded a small increase of the fat-quota. My father was well aware that their demands were perfectly justified—but the fat they wanted was simply not available.

A deputation of half a dozen working women, driven to a pitch of revolutionary fury through anxiety, poverty, and hunger, appeared at Government House. Their leader was the founder of the Socialist movement in Galicia, the member of the Reichsrat, Ignaz Daszynski. Daszynski, who was later to become a rival of Pilsudski in the resuscitated Poland, was a romantic personality. With his slender, tall figure, his fine face crowned by snow-white hair, his fiery eloquence, and his perfect command of German as well as Polish, he was a true representative of a type which is now extinct—the Socialist tribune of the nineteenth century. He was always dressed with meticulous care, and he was rather proud of the fact that he came from a family of the minor Polish landed nobility. In spite of the divergence of their opinions he would in his conversations with my father occasionally hint at an aristocratic solidarity between them.

My father received Daszynski and his deputation of strikers without delay. There they stood : the member of Parliament in his well-cut morning-coat, and the six poor women, haggard with misery ; hatred and despair in their eyes. My father knew that he could give them nothing whatever. Following a sudden inspiration, just as Daszynski was about to embark on one of his fiery tirades, my father opened the door and called out in Polish to the clerk : “Please fetch some chairs for the ladies.”

Daszynski realized at once what effect this order would have on his flock ; he hissed in German, so as not to be understood by the women : " But, please, Your Excellency —these women can surely stand before you."

My father replied ironically that at Government House surely he himself must be allowed to decide these minor social details. The chairs were brought in and the women sat down assuring my father that there was really no need for them to sit, but nevertheless obviously flattered. They would not have been true daughters of Poland if they had not been pleased by this act of courtesy. In a trice the atmosphere was cleared. My father then explained the situation to them quite frankly, and told them that they owed it to their husbands and brothers out in the front lines to go on working, in spite of their insufficient fat-rations. They agreed, and the strike was over.

I would like to add another Galician episode which was typical of the situation at the time. From a military point of view the Central Powers formed a united block, but economically they were anything but united, as increasing distress impelled each separate country to cut itself off from its neighbours. Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria each had their own food-dictators, who thought only how to support their own population, and so lost sight of the common goal. Thus it came about that there was relatively plenty in agrarian Hungary, whilst Austria, especially in her big cities, suffered bitter want. The occupied territories also tried to shut themselves off, so as to assure the food supplies for the front line. The more they talked of economic planning, the worse the general anarchy became. At that time my father, thanks to his personal relations to the Hungarian minister of supplies Prince Louis Windischgraetz (the later patriotic forger of francs), succeeded in getting ten trucks of flour from Hungary. They were brought over the frontier of the Carpathians without the official knowledge of the Hungarian Government. This flour was to be distributed in the larger towns of Galicia, whose inhabitants were no longer in a position to get their provisions by illegal trading. The news of this extraordinary bonus on the meagre quota spread like a prairie fire over the entire country, although the Press was

not allowed to mention it, as this would have implicated Prince Windischgraetz.

Many letters came to Government House from the heads of the civil authorities and the mayors of different towns, asking for some of the flour. Among them was a letter from the Archduke Charles Stephen, a brother of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Archduke Frederic, and of that Archduke Eugen who played a certain role in Schuschnigg's Austria as a protagonist of the Monarchist propaganda. Archduke Charles Stephen wrote in moving words of the sufferings of the workmen in his industrial concerns, and asked for a truck of flour from the Hungarian consignment. My father answered that he was unfortunately not able to comply with this request, as the need in other towns of his province was even more pressing.

Two days later the old Archduke appeared in person in Cracow. He greeted my father with the words: "If the mountain cannot come to Mahomet, Mahomet must come to the mountain." And in the most urgent manner, he repeated his request. Several times he stressed the fact that he, as a member of the Imperial family, must succeed in getting sufficient food for his workmen. My father replied that he regretted more than he could say that the Archduke had taken the trouble to come to Cracow in vain. In his quality of an Imperial Governor and of a loyal servant to the House of Habsburg, he would never permit workmen who happened to be employed by an Imperial Prince to be treated with preference. Such a one-sided policy must necessarily undermine the already sorely tried loyalty of the population. The Archduke understood, murmured an excuse, pressed my father's hand, and went away.

The daily anxiety for the provisioning of the population and the upkeep of order was accompanied by the great anxiety as to the fate of the country and the solution of the Polish Question. As I mentioned above, the leading circles in Vienna hoped for the Austro-Polish solution. In Berlin they thought of a closer union of the future Polish State with Germany. These divergent views led to the declaration, formulated under pressure from the German Headquarters and signed by the Allied Emperors, announcing on

5 November 1916 the foundation of an independent Poland. This declaration proved a complete failure, as everybody who knew Poland had expected. The vague form of the promises aroused suspicion and strengthened the Pan-Polish party that hoped for the victory of the Allies. It also precluded all possibility of a separate peace with Czarist Russia. The immediate purpose of the political move—which was ascribed to Ludendorff—had been to raise several hundred thousand men for the armies of the Central Powers in Congress Poland, and naturally this also failed. In spite of the declaration, propaganda for the different forms of the Polish solution appeared to continue in Congress Poland, which was occupied to a great extent in the north by German troops and in the south by Austrians. There was still a considerable group, the so-called Activists, who aimed at an Austro-Polish dualism in consideration of the good treatment the Poles inside the Austrian State had received. These tendencies and aims were finally destroyed by the German and Austrian promoters of the 'Bread-Peace' of Brest-Litowsk, Herr von Kuehlmann, and Count Czernin.

The latter especially proved to be a political amateur of the worst type. He persisted in negotiating with an Ukrainian 'Rada' whose influence was about as important as that of a local skittle-club. Count Czernin seemed to think that this group of quite unimportant people would be able to furnish a million tons of wheat a year from the Ukraine. In order to win the favour of this association he caused the Cholm districts, which belonged to Congress Poland, to be given to them. I do not wish to belittle the justified aspirations of the Ukrainian people towards founding a state of their own, but at that time the Ukrainian national movement was only just beginning. It was an extremely shortsighted policy to let the Polish bird escape from the hand for the sake of even two Ukrainian birds in the bush.

My father repeatedly warned the Emperor and the Government against continuing with this ill-starred policy. It was characteristic that the Vienna Foreign Office attempted to keep it a secret from him, although it was to be expected that the cession of the Cholm district would

lead to a rising of the nationalistic Poles in West and Central Galicia. Two days before the signing of the peace-treaty, Count Czernin was staying in Vienna. My father was also there on business and during a half-hour interval between two conferences he tried to telephone from my office in the Ministry of Marine to Count Czernin, who was to leave for Brest-Litowsk that afternoon. He wanted to point out to him for the last time that such a peace treaty would lose the Poles, destroy any hopes of an Austro-Polish solution and fail to win the Ukrainians. The Habsburg Monarchy could then only reckon on the support of the Germans, the Magyars, and a part of the Croatsians, which would mean the end of the Monarchy.

When we got the connection, a secretary answered and said that His Excellency had just retired to his private suite in order to have his luncheon. My father asked the official to tell Count Czernin that he was telephoning about a matter of utmost importance. He would be obliged if the Count would interrupt his meal for a few minutes, especially as it was not likely they would have occasion for a conversation during the next few days. After a considerable interval the secretary's voice was heard again; this time he reported that His Excellency was extremely sorry he could not interrupt his lunch. My father, naturally rather annoyed, sent the man back to his chief a second time, with a most urgent request for him to come to the telephone. Although my father was considerably older than Count Czernin and had known him intimately for a long time, the latter sent another message to the effect that he could not possibly come to the telephone himself. The Minister of Foreign Affairs was one of those statesmen, who, out of a certain mental vanity, dislike nothing more than to listen to an opinion divergent from their own if they have reason to suspect it of being well founded. After this repeated rebuff my father gave the secretary the following message for his chief. "At times when the future of the State is at stake, the luncheon of the Foreign Secretary is not a religious rite that brooks no interruption." After making the man at the other end repeat the message word for word, my father put the receiver down in a state of fury.

Fate took its course. On 9 February 1918 Count Czernin signed his 'Bread-peace.' A few hours afterwards my father telephoned from Lemberg to the Minister for Galicia, Herr von Twardowski, in Vienna. The latter was sitting in his office all unsuspecting and was most surprised when my father asked whether he already knew the new frontiers between Poland and the Ukraine. Twardowski said he did not, and added: "I can hear them calling out a special edition, perhaps that's it." My father read out to him a list of Slav towns, but Twardowski could not grasp the situation. "That means that the Cholm district has been ceded," my father explained. The only reply was a horrified gasp.

The news of the cession of this territory, which the Poles held sacred for national and religious reasons, to the hated Ukrainians fell on Galicia like a thunderbolt. The Pan-Poles, who upheld the Allies, were triumphant. The Conservatives, who were loyal to the Habsburgs, sorrowed—but everybody shouted they were betrayed. In all the Galician towns enormous demonstrations took place, which threatened to assume a revolutionary character. The Government had only the police, the *gendarmérie*, and a few thousand men of the *Landsturm* at their disposal, which were not sufficient to keep the situation in hand.

My father decided to take the anti-Austrian demonstrations into his own hands, so as to provide a safety-valve for the popular indignation and thus to avert the outbreak of open revolution.

He turned to the Archbishop of Cracow, Prince Sapieha, and persuaded him to celebrate a funeral service in the famous Cathedral of St. Mary, so as to give expression to the grief of the Polish nation at losing the Cholm district. The entire country followed the example of Cracow, and everywhere nationalist units marched with *crêpe*-veiled banners, in procession to the churches. This was sufficient to avert the major issue, and the available troops were able to suppress the minor outbreaks of unrest that followed. But the Polish people were lost for Austria and the results of a century of unflagging political work were consumed by the fires of the Great War.

In the meantime the pressure of Allied propaganda became more and more noticeable in Austria, which was

suffering from increasing want and shortage of food. Wilson's Fourteen Points, supposed to be the foundation of a new and enduring pacification of the world, were acclaimed in ever-widening circles as the new gospel. This encirclement had to be broken through somehow. So the Vienna Cabinet had the extraordinary idea of arranging elections during the War, so as to prove to the world that the motley nationalities of Austria still stood loyally to the House of Habsburg. It was a desperate remedy.

When my father arrived in Lemberg with orders to ascertain what results the elections would have in his province, a conference of the Galician civil authorities was sitting. My father drove straight from the station to the conference hall and made the plans of the Government known to the assembled officials, asking them to express their opinions. He appointed two Civil Servants as reporters and withdrew, so that they could express their ideas frankly without fearing to offend his constitutional ears. After about two hours the officials, who were hundred per cent Poles, came to bring my father the decision of the meeting. They said : " Before we report we are asked to put a preliminary question to Your Excellency. Will you gird on your sword before the election campaign, put yourself in position and say to the country : ' I, General Count Huyn, am holding elections so, or so ?—Please answer yes or no.' " My father understood the meaning of this dark enquiry and declared with a smile that he would certainly do all he could, without violating the Constitution, to allow the loyal feelings of the Polish population to find adequate expression. Thereupon the Polish spokesman declared enthusiastically : " That suffices, Your Excellency. Then if you order it, they can elect young dogs all over the country for all we care. Pugs or poodles are better for the people than demagogues—at least they are honest and cannot steal or swindle."

This anecdote may go to prove why democracy and parliamentarianism were bound to collapse in Eastern Europe. Nobody knew what to do with the new Western toy. The spirit of the East is opposed to freedom—for, according to the Eastern European conception, freedom always leads to its own misuse.

When I took over my post in the Marine Ministry during the fourth winter of the War, Vienna presented a sorry sight. The streets were deserted, the people depressed and irritable, the shops filled with worthless rubbish. The true dictators of the tortured population were not the bureaucrats or the military authorities, but the grocers and coal merchants. The intricate organization of the centralized food department with its numberless offices and groups was creaking in every joint and had only one absolute effect : to make the goods disappear. At that period the great times for the illegal traders began, who were known as 'price-drivers,' 'hoarders,' 'secret merchants,' and 'chain-merchants.' Only by great exercise of diplomacy was it possible to procure a bottle of milk, a couple of eggs, or a bag of coal. The most complicated systems of barter were thought out. Coal merchants were seduced through milk, tobaccoists through coal, the milkman through cigars. The peasants had a preference for accepting pianos and other musical instruments in exchange for potatoes, eggs, and butter. Some hoarders would show you with pride a case of 'full fat' washing soap, which they had laid down in 1916 and were now exchanging for foodstuffs. In that same terrible War-winter the ghastly epidemic of the Black Grippe or Spanish influenza set in, which the people looked upon as a divine punishment for the War. Dreadful rumours were rife in Vienna, it was said that the corpses that accumulated in the mortuaries could no longer be properly buried, as there were not enough grave-diggers, so they were thrown into pits of quicklime as in the days of the Great Plague.

Disaffection towards the Government and the desire for peace at any price increased from week to week. Desperate women wrote heartrending letters to their husbands at the front ; the Army was like a huge bloated body that became more and more immovable ; the relations between the front line and the base grew steadily worse. The base swallowed more and more men who had to follow mostly questionable occupations against their will. The number of deserters and malingerers increased alarmingly ; they surged up and down in the wider war-areas and in the hinterland, rushing aimlessly hither and thither, in horribly

overfilled trains, beleaguering the railway stations, wandering about in the woods and living by theft and robbery. Then came the moral effect of the failure of the German Army's last great heroic effort to break through on the Western Front. The end was near. We knew that we had lost the greatest war of all time.

Under pressure of the diverging nationalist forces of the realm, the Emperor Charles gave his famous manifesto to his peoples on 17 October 1918. It was a last, useless attempt to create a confederation of states under Habsburg leadership. It was too late.

My father had his last conversation with the Prime Minister, Hussarek, who, in his *naïveté*, imagined that the Emperor's 'magnanimous' appeal must make a deep impression on all the nations. My father only laughed and said: "Do you know what you have done? I must use an illustration from military discipline in order to make my meaning clear. You are like the commander of a company who would say to his soldiers in barracks: 'Ease off, break the ranks as you think fit.' Do you think these soldiers would ever come back? They'll never come back again, They will just walk out by the door." Hussarek was visibly impressed.

I came to fetch my father at the Ministry and accompanied him to the station, as he had to return to Lemberg immediately. He told me about his talk with the Prime Minister, and we agreed that Austria owed her continued existence merely to the law of inertia. A few days later the Monarchy was shattered. National Governments were formed in Zagreb, Prague, Cracow, and Lemberg. Crowds of workmen demonstrated in front of the *Landhaus* in Vienna. The ruling classes who had led the country for centuries had no other thought now than to save their lives and their property. The Jockey Club was deserted. The Bohemian, Hungarian, and Polish aristocrats had fled to their country seats, in order to weather the revolutionary storm there. The Emperor, deserted by all his followers, remained alone in Schoenbrunn. On 30 October, during the revolution, his last act as a ruler was to give away the Fleet to the Jugo-Slav National Government in Zagreb with the proviso that the other national states should receive compensation

later. This was done in the vague hope of earning the gratitude of the Southern Slavs. The next day the red-white-blue flag was flown from the Austrian ships, but not for long, as the new kingdom of Jugo-Slavia was forced to give up the Fleet, with the exception of a few small craft, to the Allies.

Those were great times for the demagogues of the extreme left in Austria, who succeeded in coming into power for a while. Like all revolutions this one began with a naïve belief in a new golden age. The Emperor deposed, the people were free, the doors of the Habsburg 'prison of nations' had been battered down. The only thing that remained to be done was to conquer the last remaining enemy of humanity, Capitalism—then surely heaven would descend to earth.

In flying haste a German-Austrian National Government was constituted, based on a coalition of the three existing parties. A provisional Constitution was worked out, and already on 12 November, one day after the fall of the Hohenzollern Empire, the State Chancellor, Karl Renner, declared German-Austria to be an integral part of the German Republic.

This declaration was a sign-post to the future. I will never forget the deep impression made on me by Renner's great speech in Parliament to which I was able to listen from a gallery. I kept thinking to myself: nothing can recall the past—nothing can reverse the wheel of history. The venerable Habsburg Empire has disappeared, never to return. From now on, there is only one aim—Germany. I thought of the small German-Austria and of the overflow of intelligence which was already streaming back to it from every side. I knew that the Germans of the former Monarchy would suffer most through the dissolution of the realm. They had occupied the leading posts in the non-German districts, thanks to their better education and to the superior position of their race; now they must lose these posts. German-Austria needed room for her talents, a new goal if she was not to drown in the pond of a new version of Switzerland. Everything pointed to it, these fresh fields could be found only in one country—Germany! I had come to the Parliament as an Austrian;

when I left, I had become not merely constitutionally but by conviction a German-Austrian. I felt that at last after all the disheartening muddling-through of the War years, there was a task ahead of us again.

. . . . .

During the next few days and weeks news came from Paris which showed that the turn events had taken in Austria was looked on with disfavour. This was not their conception of the right of self-determination of the peoples which President Wilson was proclaiming. Self-determination for the Slav peoples, the Lithuanians, the Estonians, and the Letts—but not for the Germans, who, according to the Allies, were the cause of the entire disaster. It is not my task to throw light on the dark intricacies of the question as to who bore the blame for the War. But I remember, young though I was in 1919, how indignant it made me to see the Allies acting as defendants and as judges at the same time. All the horrors of the War, the propaganda with its nerve-racking methods had not been able to rouse feelings of hatred and anger in me. I felt that I was merely an atom caught up in the vortex of these tremendous events. But when the representatives of the Allied Powers in Paris denied the principles of justice, humanity, and also of political reason, my indignation was awakened—and future events were to prove how justified it was. The foundations of an enduring peace could then have been laid in Paris just as they could have been laid in Vienna in 1815.

I shall never forget the shock I received when I saw the first map of the Versailles frontiers, which still showed the wide zones of occupied territory. At that time I knew little of the wave of nationalism which was sweeping through the victorious states, so I saw only the betrayal of the publicly proclaimed principles, the betrayal of Europe, and of the White race. Next to the veto of an Anschluss between Germany and Austria, I found the petty humiliations directed against the German people especially galling, as, for instance, the decision that Germany and Austria were no longer to have the advantage of consular jurisdiction in China. Obviously the peoples of the Far East were to be shown that the German people had ceased to belong to the

community of Christians. That small paragraph of the Treaty of Versailles, which passed unnoticed by most people, convinced me that Oswald Spengler was right with his theory of the 'Decline of the West.'

While the future of the world was being decided in Paris by short-sighted fanatics and unscrupulous demagogues, in Austria the so-called black and red coalition, consisting of Social Democrats and Christian Socialists, was trying—as best it could, and that was pretty badly—to build up a democracy. It was not an easy task, for at that time the differences between the two parties were insurmountable. The Austrian Social Democratic Party, which in those days was trying to tread the perilous path between Socialism and Communism, had only one inner political aim : to unite all Radical elements in itself so as to hinder the foundation of a Communist Party, which was a political necessity. Austrian Socialism had two faces, a democratic and an anti-democratic one, and its various theoreticians sometimes appeared to support a democratic republic, and at others the dictatorship of the proletariat. Yet the people was not ripe for either of these forms of government. In spite of certain feudal relics, the old Austria had been filled with the spirit of liberalism and tolerance. General suffrage had been introduced several years before the War, and the Parliament could overthrow the Government, although a paragraph existed that offered certain authoritarian possibilities. So the new German-Austrian Republic, which had been forbidden to join Germany, and had thus been robbed of economic advantages, had little that was new to offer to her citizens. At the same time, the people itself was entirely in the dark as to the real meaning of the republic.

I will quote a few anecdotes to illustrate the utter confusion that reigned at the time among the Austrian population.

A court of law in a town in Styria. A peasant had brought a libel suit against another, who during a quarrel had insulted him with the term 'monarchist.'

The judge :

"Now, tell me, what do you understand by the word 'monarchist' ? "

"My lord, a monarchist is a man who wants there to be order in the Republic, too."

Conversation with my charwoman before the elections :

" Who are you going to vote for ? "

" Well, I think the Communists."

" But do you mind telling me why ? "

" Well, it seems I ought to, seeing that my husband is what they call a communal employee."

Here is a conversation between two labourers which I overheard in the tram ; it should be instructive for any politician.

" To-morrow's Sunday, are you coming to the Communist meeting in front of the Rathaus ? "

" No."

" But why not ? "

" My wife went to see her aunt in the country yesterday, and she gave her a goose, so to-morrow we're going to the *Heuriger* [drinking at the vineyards]."

One more conversation shall be recorded here which took place between an uncle of mine, who was very popular both for his originality and his kind-heartedness, and an artisan from Gmunden, as they were both crossing the Traunsee in the local steamer. The workman said :

" How are things with you, *Herr Graf* ? "

" Thank you, not too good," answered my uncle.

" Sure, these be hard times for the gentry."

" Not worse for the gentry than for other people, I dare say. Nobody's well off nowadays."

" Sure, that's so, but you being a Count had your pay from the Emperor, and the Republic has stopped that."

" But what nonsense, I only drew my pay because I was a general."

" Yes, that's right, but besides that you had your special pay as a count, which the Emperor gave you out of the money that was taken from the people. The Republic's put a stop to all that. They explained it all exactly at the last meeting. It is hard lines on you, *Herr Graf*. . ."

The Golden Age prophesied by the ideologists was tardy in coming. Want increased, and the desperate efforts of the Government to avert utter ruin by a policy of inflation and devaluation of the currency only led to even worse misery. The two traditional classes which had formed the backbone

of the old Austria, the aristocracy and the *bourgeoisie*, became impoverished. An old proverb has it that poverty is no crime. This may be true, but my experiences in the countries which were hit by the inflation have shown me that impoverishment is far harder to bear than poverty, and may easily lead to crime. Only individuals on a high moral plane can resist the temptation to escape an insupportable economic situation by questionable financial manipulations bordering on fraud. Countless lives have been ruined in that manner and have come under the wheels of an inexorable doom. Many thousands thought to compensate their vanishing capital and income by easy gains. The Stock Exchange appeared to be a new El Dorado. But the first delight at this deceptive good fortune soon changed into bitter disappointment when it was discovered that no increase of prices could keep pace with the devaluation of the currency. The unhappy speculators made a rush for actual goods, but they found out only too soon that even that was no safeguard. Others again were led astray by the high figures, and sold their houses and estates for a pittance.

It was a crazy Witches' Sabbath, and the general frenzy was heightened by the appearance of thousands of shady speculators and buyers, who, coming from every country on earth, flocked like vultures on to the corpse of Austria. The cafés on the Vienna Ringstrasse were transformed into so many exchanges, where every imaginable commodity was bartered. Everybody had something 'on hand,' and would pass it on at a higher price, hoping to do business. Many of these traders had their own goods offered to them by the last man in the chain of middlemen for double the price, as every middleman had made his own profit on the way. One dealer who did not know the ropes tried to sell a truck of flour in a great Vienna café which specialized in cereals during the boom of chain-trading. He sat down at a table where some acquaintances of his, with whom he had done good business before, were already seated, and began to quote details out of his note-book, when he was peremptorily asked to go away, as this was the table for bean-dealing! At that time a friend of mine discussed, half in earnest and half in jest, the idea of editing a paper to be called *Der Schieber* (general name for illegal and shady

traders). It was to contain, besides price-quotations and advertisements for discreet business connections, discussions of contemporary theoretical questions, for instance, 'How To Rob Without Murdering.'

At that time Vienna was a city of stark and irreconcilable contrasts. The outer districts were under the sway of the proletariat, who longed for the proclamation of the *Raete*—Republic (equivalent to Soviets), and staged occasional demonstrative processions through the city. In the inner districts, that lie like a girdle along the Ringstrasse, the frightened and impoverished *bourgeoisie* led their careworn existence. The *Schiebers* lorded it in the cafés of the Ringstrasse, and the Inner City was the parade-ground of war profiteers, foreigners, and the scattered remnants of the former 'idle rich.'

Strangely enough, out of this morass the flower of pure art grew and developed. The genius of the city blossomed once more in the realms where it had always excelled, in music, literature, and applied art. For a time the Opera attained the high standard which it had held before the War under the dictatorship of Gustav Mahler. Its rulers were now Richard Strauss and Josef Schalk. Richard Strauss, at that time the idol of German music, had been called to Vienna in a manner which reminded one of a regular State action; notes were exchanged and communiqués were published, and the public was in suspense for weeks. At that time he was at the climax of his fame; the *Rosenkavalier* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* alone lifted him on to a plane high above all contemporary operatic composers. *Salome* and *Elektra* were still universally admired, and he was looked upon as the rightful successor of Richard Wagner.

Personally, I had always looked upon him as the Meyerbeer of our century, and I would often argue with musicians about him deep into the night. To me, Richard Strauss' life work was imbued with the tragedy of the decline of a great talent. One did not know what to admire more in Strauss, the virtuosity of his orchestration or his genius for business, in which again he resembled Meyerbeer. Siegfried Wagner, who could never endure Strauss, once gave vent to his feelings with the words: "Hallo! How's business?" Strauss' quick-witted answer was an equally malicious

reference to Bayreuth. "Thank you, splendid, but thank goodness it's my own and not my father's."

Since I have heard his '*Alpen Symphonie*' I feel that Strauss is artistically dangerous. He seems to me to be a sort of musical Antichrist, who is best described in the words of the poet Stefan George: "Creating, for all that is heavy and rare, a thing without weight, a thing like unto gold, out of clay . . ."

Franz Schmidt, the composer of the opera *Notre-Dame*, and of an excellent though rather over-classical symphony in E major, told me how he had played the 'cello in the orchestra during the rehearsals for the Vienna *première* of Strauss' Alpine Symphony. The *maestro* often stopped and explained some coming passages by referring to similar ones in older forgotten works.

I must confess that I consider Richard Strauss was peerless as a conductor, and I cannot understand that he was so often underestimated in that capacity. Nobody who was fortunate enough to hear him conduct Mozart and Wagner operas in the Vienna Opera House and in the *Redoutensaal* will ever forget them.

At about that time Hans Pfitzner, whose name will be immortal as the composer of the last great work of romanticism, *Palestrina*, was often seen in Vienna, where this opera was recognized as a work of extraordinary merit, although its harsh and mystical orchestration and the conscious lack of appeal to a broader public alienated many people. *Palestrina* is more like an oratorio than an opera, and that may be the reason why it made such a profound impression on me personally. I have often thought that Opera as a vehicle of expression belongs to the *bourgeois* epoch that has run its course. Grand Opera, with all its pomp and circumstance often reminded me of the enormous pictures, filled with vast crowds and glowing with bright colours, which were popular in the middle of the last century, and for which the artists of Paris have invented the apt term, '*grande machine*.'

During the first years after the War Vienna experienced an astonishing revival of Gustav Mahler's popularity; the Viennese music critics lauded him to the skies as the last great symphonic composer of Germany. He was not quite

that, of course, and his intentions often surpassed his actual creation, but he came very near to being truly great in the *Kindertotenlieder* and 'The Song of the Earth.'

Simultaneously with this revival of operatic music, which also included Verdi's operas, we experienced a return to Johann Sebastian Bach. This was in truth a homecoming, for all the spiritual sources of what is finest in the German soul are to be found in Bach. He is the fundamental source to which German music must invariably return in times of doubt. Bach is for German music—perhaps for the music of the entire Western world—what Homer was for the poets of the ancients : the beginning and the end.

## CHAPTER FOUR

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### THE JEWISH PROBLEM

DURING THE POST-WAR period in Vienna I first came face to face with the Jewish problem with all its implications. Although I spent a great part of my childhood in Galicia, I had not noticed its existence. Jews never came to my parents' house, and this was almost a rule at the time with most members of the Austrian aristocracy. Anti-Semitism from a religious or a racial standpoint was very nearly unknown, but the exclusiveness of an aristocratic society led to an *asemitic* attitude.

In the first years after the War the century-old social barriers were swept away, and the hitherto so sharply divided classes intermingled. The impoverishment of the aristocracy and of the native *bourgeoisie* and the loss of influence of the former ruling classes led to the development of an anti-Semitic resentment which could not be explained merely by the simultaneous advance of the Jews in the economic and political life of the nation.

Religious anti-Semitism is centuries old. Even during the Crusades, the pious Christian warriors used to begin the liberation of the Holy Land by a little mild plundering in the ghettos of Western Germany. Racial anti-Semitism, however, is of more recent date. It first acquired a certain political importance in Austria at the end of the nineteenth century, when the leaders of the Christian-Socialist movement began to use anti-Semitic slogans. Those were the days when the great Viennese 'man of the people' and later Burgomaster Karl Lueger used to jump on to the table at the meetings in the outer districts and shout : "Tear the

innards out of the Jews !” But this Christian-Socialistic anti-Semitism was not so very serious, and it did not hinder Lueger from occasional social intercourse with Jews. Somebody once reproached him with this, and he answered with the historical dictum that was later attributed to Goering : “ It’s up to me to decide who’s a Jew or not.”

This pre-War anti-Semitism was relatively unimportant, as it never played more than a negligible part in practical politics. Jewry, of which the majority belonged to the Liberal Party, countered this racial opposition with the formula : ‘ No more medieval religious hatred.’ This inept attempt of liberal Jewry to represent the incipient racial anti-Semitism as religious persecution did something to awaken anti-Jewish feelings even in quite unpolitical circles. But all this was no more than a prelude to the mighty outburst of anti-Semitism which flared up after the War through manifold different causes.

The conservative section of the population was highly incensed at the fact that the Jews were the true leaders of Austrian radical Socialism, for nearly all the leaders of Social Democracy were Jews. The entire Press propaganda against Imperial Austria, whose memory was still dear to the majority of the Austrian people, proceeded from Jews. This called forth anti-Semitic resentment on the part of many thousands of former officials and officers, who had lost their positions and their income with the downfall of the old monarchy. And not only that—for the Jews were pushing to the fore in an economic way as well—the dissolution of the pre-War order, which had at least the advantage that people with modest means could still occupy positions of note, was accompanied by the appearance of a purely capitalistic order of society. Money ruled the world unashamedly. Partly for historical reasons, partly owing to their especial preferences and talents, the Jews were in those liberal professions which had suffered not at all or only slightly through the inflation and the general loss of capital. This led to the widespread belief that the Jews were succeeding in making personal profits through the ruin of their fellow-citizens. The rise of a few remarkable speculative financiers, like Castiglioni and Bosel, strengthened this belief. Thus ever-increasing circles looked upon the

Jews as the personification of the evil principle on earth.

Special local reasons went to increase the anti-Semitic movement in Vienna. We must not forget that a huge stream of Jewish refugees from the East who feared Czarist Russia as their worst enemy had poured into Vienna during the first months of the Great War. Only a fraction of these Jewish emigrants eventually returned to their native Galicia. The others, in view of the better opportunities of earning, had preferred to remain in Vienna. Naturally this increased the pressure of the Jewish majority on the employment mart and on the already overcrowded liberal professions. These Jewish emigrants were, for reasons of policy, welcomed by the Social Democrats and great numbers of them were given citizenship. Here again, the anti-Semitic theory of a deep-laid plan of work of united Jewry seemed justified.

During the time I spent in Vienna, I was able to watch the steady increase of the anti-Semitic movement. Many of my friends who had not taken the slightest interest in the Jewish question during the War, now became rabid Jew-haters. Then, through a friend, I made the acquaintance of one of the queerest birds I have ever met—Artur Trebitsch.

There is a Viennese joke which used to be occasionally quoted in the old days : Anti-Semitism will not have a political future until it is taken in hand by a clever Jew. Artur Trebitsch obviously thought that Providence had chosen him to play this part—for he was a hundred per cent Jew, and at the same time an embittered anti-Semite. Even to-day some of his forceful sayings would be a real boon for the editors of Jew-baiting publications. I learnt the most surprising things in my conversations with Trebitsch. He was a firm believer in a Jewish world-plan (as demonstrated in the famous *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*) aiming at conquering the entire world. I was told that the reason why Jews are so successful economically is only because, in comparison with Aryans, they are less hampered by moral scruples. Jews, he maintained, had but one idol—money. Higher aims were quite unknown to them. When they pronounced the word ‘gold’ in the course of a conversation, they automatically bowed slightly.

The thumb of a Jewish hand, which was accustomed to dig among coins, was immovable and could only be held at right angles from the index-finger, which gesture was a sure sign of greed. Also Jews never gesticulated like Aryans with outstretched arms, but with their elbows pressed against their hips, in the so-called fin-position.

These remarks struck me as highly peculiar, and I was still more amazed when I read Trebitsch's standard work *German Intellect and Jewry*. The author had prefaced it with the untranslatable pun of a Hungarian anti-Semite: 'Der Arier schafft, der Jude verschafft sich die Welt.' (The Aryan creates his world, the Jew procures his.) This book, in which craziness and intelligence are inextricably blended, is written with undoubted talent. Trebitsch declared that he was called to liberate German-Austria from the hegemony of the Jews. He had prepared himself for this Herculean task by a fruitful exchange of ideas with his friend and master at Bayreuth, the defender of the true Germanic ideal—Houston Stewart Chamberlain. His eyes blazing fanatically, Trebitsch told me how Jewry knew of his resolve and had decided to assassinate him. Only a short while ago a man (in the pay of 'All Judah') had wanted to cut down a chestnut tree, whose green branches he could see from the window of his study. 'All Judah' possessed the secret death-ray, which could, however, be neutralized by the chlorophyl of green leaves. Fortunately, he had been able to avert this devilish attempt in the nick of time.

On the evening after he had revealed this conspiracy to me, we met in a modest Viennese inn where, in times gone by, Johannes Brahms had been wont to take his meals. We ordered a *Gulyash* (Hungarian stew) of veal, which was the speciality of the place. By this time Trebitsch had calmed down a little, so that the conversation took a literary turn. But the poor man could not throw off his persecution mania, and bad luck would have it that two waiters were whispering together in a corner. He noticed this at once and his suspicions were immediately aroused. He refused to eat the *Gulyash*; he was sure that it was poisoned by orders of 'All Judah.' In vain I tried to convince him that the landlord, who was well known to me as a good Aryan, would never employ waiters capable of committing crimes

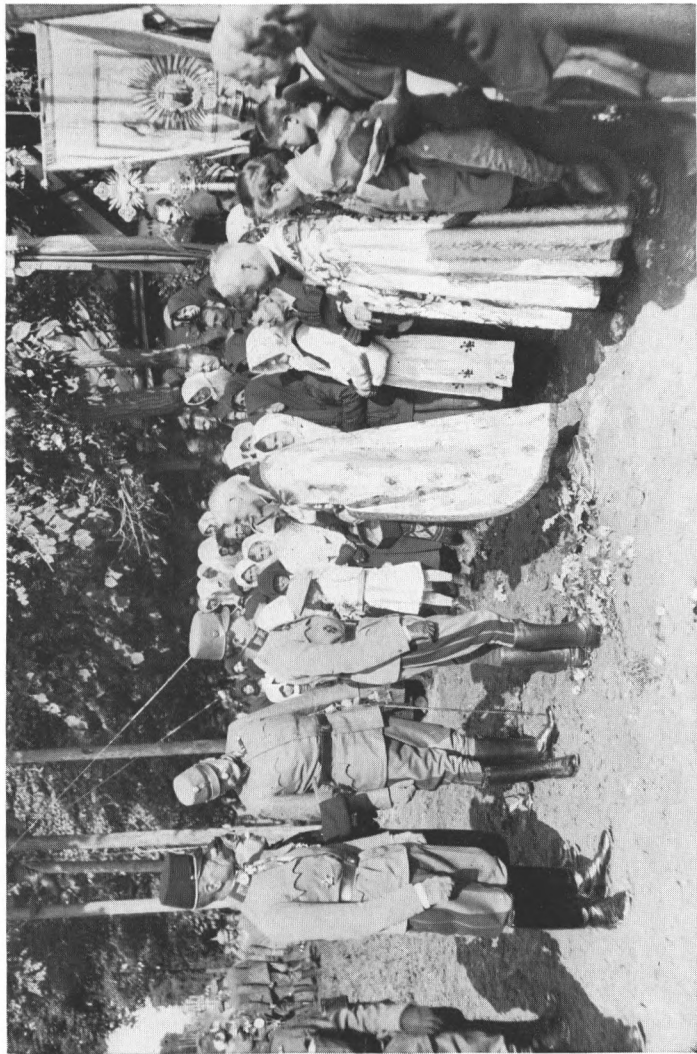
to serve Jewry. Finally I offered to exchange my portion of the *Gulyash* for his—a suggestion which he accepted without further demur. Even to-day I am at a loss to understand how a man usually so kind-hearted could bring himself to watch me eating the dish poisoned by world-Jewry !

A few days later Trebitsch held a meeting in one of the suburbs, and I attended it out of curiosity. The attentive audience consisted of some hundreds of young people, mostly public schoolboys and shop assistants. The *clou* of his lecture was a description of how a Jewish doctor had brought about the death of a woman through his evil practices. Afterwards some young men collected round Trebitsch and he explained to them how necessary it was that the anti-Semites of Vienna should profess their principles in public. He was therefore prepared to lead a procession of his followers down the Ringstrasse on the following Sunday. After some hesitation, one of the students expressed the opinion that the idea was excellent, but could not very well be carried out in that way. Trebitsch insisted on being told the reason, and at last the student conquered his embarrassment sufficiently to falter out : “ Herr Trebitsch, we all have a great admiration for you ; you have torn the bandages from our eyes, and you are our leader and master. But we couldn’t very well march down the Ringstrasse with you leading us. You see, one must not forget that in a manner of speaking you yourself are a Jew.”

Even this objection could not silence the indomitable Trebitsch. In a voice of thunder he shouted to the student : “ What do you know about the mysteries of blood-mixtures and un-mixtures ? ”

In spite of this truly magnificent answer the proposed procession did not take place. Later on I lost sight of Trebitsch. I heard that he died and left his very considerable fortune to the leading anti-Semitic publishing house of Germany.

I was to experience the full importance of the Jewish problem during the several years of my stay in Poland. In Austria I had already occasionally been told that the indigenous Jews resented the intrusion of the Eastern Jews as a danger. So I was curious to see the place of origin of these ‘ undesirable elements.’ Let me say straight away

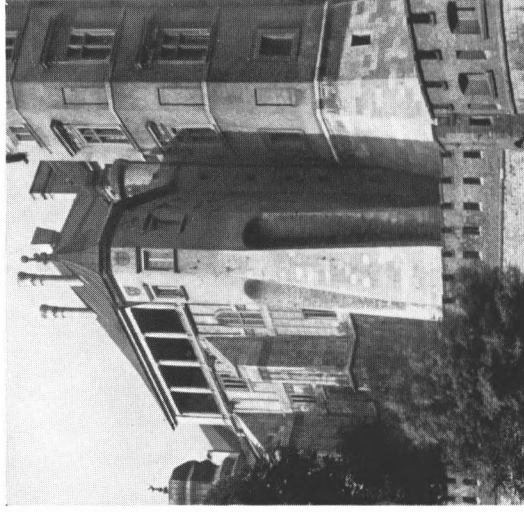


*Photo: Brüder Schumann*

The Emperor, Karl, conversing with a Greek Catholic priest in an Eastern Galician village.  
Behind him is Count Huyn's father.



The miracle-working Rabbi of Czortków.



*Photo Prof. A. Lenkiewicz*

Wawel, the ancient Royal castle at Cracow.

that the Eastern Jews are better than they are reputed to be by other Jews and Christians. The special conditions under which this strange race of people live deserve a rather more detailed description.

The Jews represent about 10 per cent of the population of Poland. They live almost without exception in the towns, and although the walls of the ghettos have fallen long ago, they still prefer to live in separate parts of the cities as separate communities. In Warsaw, Cracow, and Lemberg, there is a sharp dividing line between the Polish and the Jewish quarter. The farther East one goes, the greater the Jewish quota of the urban population. In some places it actually exceeds 80 per cent. In these ghettos the Eastern Jews live their own separate lives, which are barely touched by the events happening in the Polish or Ukrainian world around them. For centuries the difference of religion, old language, manners, and even dress between the Jews and the Slavs has divided the two peoples—for as such they must be looked upon—with an insurmountable barrier. The Jews who have been assimilated are very rare, and they are looked upon both by the Orthodox and the Zionist Jews with the utmost scorn.

The Eastern Jews live in this close community as their fathers and forefathers did, by commerce and occasional business deals, but unlike their co-religionists in Western and Central Europe, they also do manual work, and we find smiths, builders' mates, packers, and wagoners among them. These ghettos are filled from morning till late at night with ant-like activity. Want and poverty stimulate the Jewish commercial instincts to the utmost, but here their case is almost hopeless, and only very few succeed in attaining a certain degree of economic independence. The industrial revolution, the Christian trade unions, as well as the destruction of capital through the Great War and the economic crises of the last twenty years all hit the Eastern Jews very hard. Their world, which is founded on a rigid conservatism and a patriarchal mode of life, threatens to collapse. Whilst the older generation are still devoutly religious, the younger one is strongly influenced by revolutionary and Communistic ideas, which are coloured by the Zionist ideology. This dangerous development is as

natural as it is inevitable. The impossibility of finding a place for these Jewish masses in the economic structure and the limitation of the quota of emigrants to America and Palestine have had strong reactions in the whole of Eastern Jewry, which again strengthens the anti-Semitic attitude of the countries that afford them shelter. The result is a further restriction of the Jewish sphere of action. The growing radicalism of the Jews represents a very grave danger for the Eastern states, as it threatens to destroy the entire existing social order.

In considering the position of Jewry in Eastern Europe, we must also remember that anti-Semitism is a genuine and indigenous factor there, and not, as in Germany, the artificial product of clever propaganda. No Jew, however wealthy or influential, is received in Polish society. He remains an outcast as long as he lives. Naturally these conditions led to a mighty increase of Jewish nationalism, which often culminates in a blind and ridiculous chauvinism. The involved Jewish problem is made still more complicated by the fact that this highly gifted people is extremely individualistic, so that innumerable parties and groups are formed, who strive against each other with passionate bitterness. Jewry only presents a united front in moments of national danger, but as soon as it is over it is again divided against itself. This fact alone should suffice to disprove the anti-Semitic legend of a concerted Jewish plan for world domination.

One of the most discussed questions is the relationship between Jewry and the German idea. It is well known that the Eastern Jews hold fast to their language—Yiddish—which is derived from German. The German-Jewish liberals of the last century often called the Eastern Jews the pioneers of German *Kultur* in the East. It cannot be denied that these Eastern Jews, who number approximately eight million, have a very strong affinity to German *Kultur*. They prefer to read German books and papers, and the German classics, Goethe and Schiller, were favourite authors in Yiddish lending libraries. The contention raised by the anti-Semites and more recently by the National Socialists that the Jews have added a foreign element to the interpretation of German art is justified. Yet on the whole the German

idea has profited more than it has lost by this. The worldwide acknowledgment of German *Kultur* and especially its high position in Eastern Europe is largely due to the unflagging zeal of these Jewish mediators.

In decisive moments Jewry has more than once upheld Germany in the field of politics. I need only refer to the part played by the Jewish intellectuals in overcoming the nationalistic opposition to Germany after the War. In the first years after its cessation, when German diplomats and German business men lived in a kind of vacuum, divided by abysmal prejudices from the rest of the world, the Jews were the first to resume the broken links. Partly for economic reasons they pointed out the necessity of justice for the German people and of tempering the harshness of the reparations. This act of far-seeing and courageous Jews represents an invaluable service not only to Germany but to humanity as a whole.

In Warsaw I once had a conversation about this question with a friend of mine, an officer of the French General Staff, who had mastered German as well as several Slav languages, and had studied the Jewish problem professionally for many years. He told me that, in the course of his travels, he had visited Russia, Poland, and the Balkans, and he had known Jews who belonged intellectually to Germany, others whose cultural home was Russia. He had met Jewish communities in the Levant whose whole mode of thought was French—but not once had he come upon a Jew in Eastern Europe who was inimical to Germany.

This political affinity of Jewry to Germany, which the German Army Command made full use of in the Great War, can be explained by the fact that the Eastern Jews were not confronted by an anti-Jewish attitude of the people in Germany. Their co-religionists, in their thousands and ten thousands, had become prosperous and respected German citizens, and attained high positions. Some especially fortunate ones had even had high-sounding titles conferred on them by German princes, a fact that stimulated the imagination of the primitive Eastern Jews tremendously. This appeared to them as another proof that Jews could attain in Germany the social equality for which they longed. It is not surprising under these circum-

stances that these Eastern Jews were the most zealous buyers and propagandists of German goods. German concerns gave preference to Jewish commercial travellers for Eastern Europe, not only because of their commercial ability, but also because they were especially adapted for this work by reason of their command of languages. German industry was not the loser. One can say that Germany and not Palestine appeared to the Jews of Poland and the surrounding countries as the true Promised Land.

These fixed conceptions, which gained colour through the liberalism of the Weimar Republic and of democratic German-Austria, were suddenly overthrown by the news, amazing to the majority of Eastern Jews, that National Socialism and racial anti-Semitism had arisen in Germany. At first they simply could not believe it—they could not imagine that the German people they admired so much, and from whom they had received nothing but benefits during the last hundred years, should suddenly go wrong in this inexplicable manner. But when Adolf Hitler came into power and racial anti-Semitism was made a leading principle of the State, the Jewish dream-world was finally shattered. Love and admiration changed into passionate hatred, mingled, in the case of the older generation, with deep regret for the lost German Paradise. The Eastern Jews could not understand the world any longer. It is not surprising that Jewry reacted with the politically unsound idea of countering the National Socialist Jew-baiting by boycotting German goods.

In March 1933, when Germany was preparing the first general boycott of Jewish warehouses (which lasted only a few hours) as a counter-move to the alleged Jewish atrocity campaign, I happened to meet the Zionist leader, Dr. Rozmaryn, in the lobby of the Polish Diet. I had known Dr. Rozmaryn for a number of years and I respected him as one of the leading political brains of Eastern Jewry. We both felt the urge to discuss the burning questions of the moment thoroughly, so we left the Parliament building and took a walk through the town. The Polish journalists who saw us leave the Sejm put their heads together at the unwonted spectacle of the Zionist leader walking off amicably with the German official.

Rozmaryn described with passionate intensity the terrible indignation that had arisen against Germany among the Jews of Poland, and repeatedly he expressed the hope that the economic pressure exercised by united world-Jewry might put a stop to the persecution of Jews in Germany. I told him frankly that I could not agree with him, and explained that the Jews were allowing their indignation to lead them into a disastrous policy, which would harm them more than it could harm Germany. Certain events in Germany were assuredly most regrettable and the reaction of the democracies and the remainder of the liberal-minded world to these events was a unanimous condemnation of them. But why, I continued, must the Jews go still further and thus divide themselves from their Christian supporters? In Western Europe the Jews had been largely assimilated—they had become Frenchmen and Englishmen and it was very important to them that their co-citizens should regard them as such. If the Jews of Western Europe now insisted on segregating themselves and pursuing an independent and dangerous economic policy, they would only draw the attention of the great masses of the people among whom they lived to the fact that they were different. The Jews, who had the greatest interest in maintaining liberal views, were now in the act of destroying these very views and were cutting off the branch on which they were sitting. According to my opinion, the boycott of German goods would not put an end to anti-Jewish feeling in Germany, it would actually clear the way for anti-Semitism in Western Europe and America. I ended with a quotation from a poem by the great German poetess Annette v. Droste-Hülshoff, which precedes her masterpiece, *Die Judenbuche*. It runs: 'Throw not the stone, it strikes your own head first.'

Rozmaryn appeared deeply impressed by my remarks. He stopped suddenly in the middle of the traffic and gazed at me, sunk in profound meditation. Then he raised both his arms with a despairing gesture and exclaimed: "But do not forget the humiliation to human dignity!" I could only shrug my shoulders—and we took leave of each other with a cordial handshake.

The developments I had foreseen were not long in materializing. The boycott movement as a political device

missed its aim, and anti-Semitism became rife among a number of nations where it had hitherto been practically unknown. Nevertheless the inner structure of the different Jewish groups scattered over the world suffered no appreciable change. Jewry in Western Europe has been largely assimilated and absorbed in the nationality of the indigenous races, while the Eastern Jews still form religious and national minorities. The small percentage of assimilated Eastern Jews who have even played a decisive part in the national movements of Slav peoples, does not constitute a counter-argument to the theory of their fundamental difference, no more than the Jews one occasionally finds in Western Europe, who are as distinct and separate as the Eastern Jews.

The German Jew—if we except the entirely assimilated Jews of Western Germany and the Rhineland—occupies a position between the two extremes. The numerous and almost uninterrupted immigration from the East was an impediment to the entire assimilation of Jews in Eastern Germany, which must also include the Jews of Austria. The dream of founding a lasting Jewish homestead in Palestine, the mingling with Eastern Jews through the different Jewish organizations and finally the increase of anti-Semitism in post-War times have all participated in making the German Jew into a double-faced being who is torn between two nations—the German and the Israelite. This almost inevitable development gave ample opportunity to those representatives of German Jewry who were ethically on a low level to make use of their double national allegiance in an opportunist manner, and this of course provided the anti-Jewish propaganda of the Nazis with new arguments. On the other hand, those Jews whose moral standpoint was a high one, suffered intensely under this dualism which brought them almost daily face to face with very difficult problems.

This conflict was especially tragic for those German Jews who were politically active. An example was a powerful Jewish *Ministerialdirektor*, who worked at the German Foreign Office during the last years of the Weimar Republic and the first years of the Third Reich, and was an enthusiastic German patriot. The outbreak of the Great

War took place when he was in the Far East, and he shirked neither discomfort nor danger in order to return to Germany as quickly as possible. There he immediately reported for active service. He was a man of great gifts, and in his official position he had a very thorough knowledge of his particular province without ever losing sight of the main issues. Nevertheless, he was incapable of taking objective decisions in all cases, for under pressure of the anti-Jewish feeling that surrounded him his patriotism had grown into nationalism, actually into blind chauvinism. Because of his Jewish descent and without realizing it, he was unceasingly under the compulsion of proving how thoroughly German he was. It was impossible for him to support any solution other than extreme nationalism, because he lived continually in fear and trembling lest he be considered a supporter of international Jewry.

I have seen dozens of similar cases, and they have confirmed my opinion that in times when anti-Semitic ideas influence the public opinion of a country, the Jews should avoid every form of public activity both in their own interest and in that of the community. Yet many of them have been politically prominent or otherwise subjected to the limelight of publicity in none too favourable roles, and so, contrary to their own intentions, they have aggravated the anti-Semitic movement. A typical representative of this type was the well-known Austrian manufacturer of armaments, Fritz Mandl, whose ambition was to be the foreign adviser of the Austrian *Heimwehr*.

During the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg era in Austria the frightened Jews also made the mistake of trying to influence political events in their own favour. They threw themselves with heart and soul into movements which they hoped might become bulwarks against the rising tide of National Socialism. They became enthusiastic monarchists and supporters of the *Heimwehr*, and developed a pathetic brand of Austrian super-patriotism. The only tangible result of this was that these political movements were hopelessly compromised in the eyes of the population, which was being increasingly infiltrated with anti-Jewish ideas. The remark of a Christian Labour leader during the last months of the Schuschnigg régime was characteristic of

the attitude prevalent in Austria at the time. He said that nobody could understand the Jews any longer. In 1919 they had done all they could to turn the monarchistical Austrians into republicans, and now in 1937 their aim seemed to consist in transforming these Austrian republicans back again into loyal supporters of the House of Habsburg.

Many far-seeing Jews watched their co-religionists pushing to the fore in public life and constructive politics with distaste and secret anxiety. A few months after Adolf Hitler had come into power a clever Berlin Jew said to me—and I agree with him :

“The anti-Semitism which we are now witnessing in Germany is directed not against the six hundred thousand Jews of the country, but against the six thousand who have pushed themselves into the foreground. We all must suffer for the sins and the thoughtlessness of these six thousand.”

This is indeed one of the most important and often neglected points of the Jewish problem. The anti-Jewish attitude of to-day is the result of one of those generalizations which are characteristic of the brutalized political life of our times. Whenever politicians reach the end of their resources they look for a scapegoat, and for cheap slogans with which they create an outlet for the discontent of the people.

A hundred years ago a Prussian king said that anti-Semitism is the Socialism of Fools. This may be correct, but it does not alter the political facts nor do away with the necessity of tackling the Jewish problem in a practical manner. The solution already exists for the Jews of Western Europe. It consists in assimilation, in complete merging into the nations that surround them, and in an entire giving up of Zionism and all other Jewish national movements and groups. Otherwise the Jews of Western Europe are bound to tread the same perilous path as German Jewry did in the past, and run a similar risk of losing all their rights.

On the other hand, the attempt must be made to find territories where the Eastern and the German Jews, who have not assimilated themselves or who have lost the battle for assimilation, can settle permanently. To-day it can be affirmed that the small territory of Palestine cannot be looked upon as a suitable homestead for millions of Jews. The policy of the Allies and of the Zionists which led to the

Balfour Declaration was not so much dictated by a considered economic policy as by opportunist and romantic considerations. No practical policy can be based on the so-called historical right of nations. Yet these errors may still be corrected if a world conference were summoned with as little delay as possible, with the aim of giving the Jewish people an autonomous homeland of their own, in some other territory outside Europe. The Evian conference was only a beginning.

Such a repatriation of the Jews would naturally take many years. This practical solution should not be given as a concession to anti-Semitism, but as a recognition that a people which has been homeless for nineteen hundred years has a right to a state of its own. Simultaneously, however, the relations between the Occidental nations, deafened by anti-Semitic propaganda, and the Jews must be freed from the accumulated poisons of hatred, resentment, and the distaste for those Jewish characteristics which are alien to the West. This can only be done by a wholehearted return to the eternal tenets of Christian ethics, which are based on universal love, justice, and truth, and whose most sacred law is expressed in the words: 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.'

## CHAPTER FIVE

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### NEW PASTURES

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE old Austria set me a new task, not only politically, but also economically. The Navy had ceased to exist, and I was forced to take up the struggle for a livelihood, a struggle which had hitherto remained an unknown quantity to me. The banquet of life had always been well appointed for the so-called hundred families of the nobility, who had formed the actual ruling class of the old Austria. The leading families had not only possessed considerable means, but like the patricians of the Free Cities of the Reich and the Hanseatic League, they had by force of tradition occupied the principal positions in the Government and the Army. Economic difficulties had been practically unknown to these spoilt children of Fate, as even the less gifted and the poorer among them could always find some employment at Court.

Both the progressive democratization and the very exclusiveness of the Austrian nobility, which was an anachronism in itself, ended by having a disastrous effect on the nobility's position. Nevertheless, up to the outbreak of the Great War, neither the *bourgeoisie* nor the working classes had succeeded in breaking the strong feudal system of the Austrian Monarchy. The best representatives of the nobility were fully aware that this system could only be maintained if the nobility could prove its right to these leading positions by its actual worth. These at least were the tenets that I was taught by my parents. Yet it cannot be denied that more and more members of the nobility turned their backs on these principles. More and more they

appeared content to occupy any comfortable and purely decorative position in the State. Many of them considered it sufficient to dabble in the Army, diplomacy, or the Government, and these were the very people who were most amazed when life walked rough-shod over their belated claims. By so doing, the greater part of the nobility of pre-War Austria relinquished the aristocratic principles which are most tersely expressed in the motto of the Prince of Wales, '*Ich Dien*,' and so they placed themselves on a level with a class they scorned, the moneyed *bourgeoisie*, whose chief aim was gain. In Austria at least the *bourgeoisie* proved itself utterly incapable of forming a ruling class from its own ranks. Stability in a state can only be assured by such a class.

The new circumstances of life demanded a new mental attitude. I recognized this immediately, and in that I differed from most people of my position, who believed in a speedy return of former conditions. I attempted to gain a hold in the world of business, but soon enough I was made to realize that my title was doing me as much harm under the changed conditions as it had been helpful under the former ones. The exclusivism of the aristocracy had naturally engendered a number of mistaken conceptions as to the degeneration, laziness, and stupidity of the bearers of historic names. These ideas were apparently confirmed by the not infrequent appearance of really degenerated products of aristocratic inbreeding. Thus I was barely given the opportunity of proving that I was capable and willing to work, since the different potential employers to whom I presented myself believed that I was incapable of realizing the changed conditions and was trying to commercialize my no longer existing aristocratic privileges in an easy manner. It was not an encouraging state of affairs for a young man who, full of zeal and energy, was attempting to build up a new existence. Thus I found myself forced to undertake the very risky attempt of earning my living by independent commercial enterprise.

After the many years of the blockade there was an enormous demand for goods in Vienna. Why should I not become an importer? My modest capital was not sufficient to purchase the more important commodities, so I began

in company with another former naval officer who had good relations to the Italian military mission, to import solid rubber plates for artificial dentures. For a time business went quite well, and our agent could place our goods for cash with dentists and dental practitioners. Then a sudden catastrophe overtook us. Our agent, an elderly man, had a stroke while on the way to a client, and fell dead on the spot. One of the passers-by who stopped to assist the unfortunate man seized the opportunity to make off with our entire stock, which was contained in an attaché-case.

My attempt to join the ranks of manufacturers was to end as unsatisfactorily. I rented a workshop in one of the outer districts, purchased three machines in order to manufacture those paper tubes into which people stuffed the inferior tobacco they bought during the War. I engaged a foreman and three girls, and we began to manufacture the the cigarette-tubes under the name 'Matapan,' so called after the southern promontory of Greece which I had often circumnavigated. The special advantage of my 'Matapan-tubes' was a patented untearable seam. The production of this article outran the disposal of the finished product. Soon our store-room was filled to bursting point with 'Matapan-tubes.' I refused the offer of my partner to rent further premises, as I thought it would be a pity to transform all the tissue-paper imported from Bohemia into 'Matapan' cigarette-tubes. During this critical period I became seriously ill and had to go to hospital for two months. When I recovered I discovered that my partner had filled the whole of the workroom with 'Matapans,' which had at least the advantage of slowing down production. I put a stop to these alarming activities and succeeded, though not without losses and difficulties, in ridding myself of 'Matapan-tubes,' girls, and partner.

This was not the end of my hazardous navigations on the seas of commerce. Among other ventures, I worked for several months in a private bank, which transmitted the foreign rates of exchange abroad for the use of the mysterious sect of the *arbitrageurs*.

At last, in 1921, a naval friend of mine who was employed in the Press offices of the Chancellery proposed that I should join his office—an offer which I was naturally only too glad

to accept. So I was able to transfer my activities to the famous old house on the *Ballhausplatz*, where in days gone by Prince Kaunitz, the Chancellor of the great Empress Maria Theresa, and Prince Metternich, who was called the coachman of Europe, had their residence. Everything there reminded one how great the past had been, and how small the present was. In the sumptuous halls, whose walls were hung with brocade, where in the old days befrogged footmen had placed silver chandeliers on the tables for the high and mighty officials with their powdered wigs, there now worked helpless, underpaid, and frightened employees of lower middle class antecedents who were for ever nervously on the *qui vive* to gauge the temper of the crowds in the streets below. When not otherwise occupied, they whiled away the time by reading papers and in petty intrigues.

The so-called creeping Bolshevism of 1919 and 1920 was still much in evidence. A chance visitor of the house on the *Ballhausplatz* must have gone away with the impression that not the Ministers, the Secretaries of the State, and the departmental directors, but the Socialist clerks and porters were the real masters there. They shouted in the corridors, held political discussions in the ante-rooms, and successfully disturbed the few people who really desired to do some work. I can still remember the dumbfounded expression on the faces of such a chattering gang when I surprised them with the question whether I would be disturbing their exchange of opinions if I were to write in the next room.

A few of the clerks, however, would have none of the new era with its diverse achievements, to use a favourite phrase of those days. They remained unbending reactionaries, and showed their profound contempt for republican institutions in the most unexpected ways. One of that ilk was a certain porter who was asked sometime in 1919 whether the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Otto Bauer, was in the building, and replied tersely: "His Excellency the dirty Jew has his office on the first floor." This was too much even for the oft-praised long-suffering of the Republic, and as a punitive measure the man was transferred to the back door. This porter was a worthy colleague of the clerk of a previous Premier, Count Taaffe, who once came to a tobacconist in the *Herrngasse* with the request for change for a ten-florin

note, and remarked : " His Excellency sent me across because he is expecting a Member of Parliament. It stands to reason that he does not want to stop the fellow's mouth with all of the ten florins."

The political convictions of the officials of the Chancellery presented a faithful mirror of the divisions in the country. Every shade and colour of opinion was represented among them : Christian Socialists, clericals, pan-Germans, Peoples' Party, Social Democrats, Democrats, and even a few die-hard legitimists. The most numerous group, as always in times of political stress and economical uncertainty, consisted of the immortal brand of opportunists, who, unhampered by any higher aims, devoted all their energies to keeping afloat at any price.

The Press bureau was especially motley, as in all the ministries the world over. It is not surprising under the circumstances that it was a rare collection of originals and eccentrics. Many of these people were highly gifted, and possessed a quite uncanny knowledge of facts and persons. One of the queerest birds there was a certain Clam, whose pan-German convictions were visibly expressed by his great red beard *à la* Wotan. He worked in a room that looked like a prison cell, which could only be approached through a narrow passage. Of course, this was christened ' Clam's *Klamm* ' (*klamm* means a narrow gorge or pass). This man belonged to that amazing genus of *homo sapiens* whose knowledge exceeds even that of an encyclopædia. He was a true wanderer on the face of the earth, and he was fond of telling us episodes of his adventurous life.

An amazing experience he had when he was editing the foreign news section of an important Munich daily paper deserves to be repeated here. In the first days of May, 1903, a stranger, who would not give his name, visited him in his office. The mysterious visitor handed Clam an article which he had written and requested him to publish it. The article contained, supported by a number of precise details, the sensational announcement of an imminent military rebellion in Serbia. The writer explained that the aim of this rebellion was to overthrow the dynasty of the Obrenovitch, which was friendly to Austria, and to set the Karageorgevitch family (who still rule the kingdom of Yugoslavia) in

their place. Clam was well acquainted with the tortuous maze of Balkan politics, and he realized that the carefully documented announcement was very probably founded on fact. He agreed to publish the article, and the mysterious stranger departed in high spirits, after having made Clam promise faithfully never to divulge the origin of the article.

Its publication burst on Vienna and the Balkan capitals like a bombshell. On the very next morning Clam received a telephone call from the Austrian Legation in Munich, asking him most urgently to divulge the source of his information. He was also informed that the whole story was untrue. The Austrian Minister in Belgrade had already been interrogated and had replied that there could be no question of serious disaffection in the Serbian Army, and that King Alexander was secure on his throne.

A few weeks later Clam, who had taken his summer holiday, was crossing the lake of Geneva on a steamer, and when he landed at the latter town he saw the special editions announcing in great headlines the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga by rebel officers. As many of us remember, the rebels had penetrated into the Royal palace and forced their way into the Monarch's bedroom, where they murdered the Royal couple—crowning their barbarous act by throwing the naked bodies of their victims out of the window.

Everything had come to pass as the mysterious writer of the article had foretold. The journalist in Clam sprang to attention. He knew that Prince Peter Karageorgevitch, the Pretender to the Servian throne, was living in exile in Geneva, and he decided there and then to make an attempt to interview the Prince for his paper. Less than an hour later he was ringing the bell of a modest apartment. He heard the sound of approaching steps, the door was opened, and he saw—his mysterious visitor, who turned pale at the sight of Clam and laid his finger on his lips, mutely adjuring him to keep their secret. Clam nodded curtly and then asked in French whether he could speak to Prince Peter, introducing himself as the editor of a great German paper. A few minutes later he found himself sitting opposite the future king.

Clam never asked the writer of the article, who was later

to attain a high position in Belgrade, what his intentions in writing it had been. The most probable explanation seems to be that this man, who was naturally in the plot, wished to warn the Obrenovitch family, so that in case the rebellion should be abortive, he could point to the article as a proof of his loyalty to the old dynasty. It is not surprising that Clam, when he had occasion to visit Belgrade later, always found the way to the leading personalities smoothed for him by invisible hands.

In the winter season of 1921 to 1922, the last I spent in Vienna, there was a temporary revival of the social life of the city. It was but a shadow of former glory. Some of the lovely Baroque palaces of the nobility were thrown open to guests, many of them for the last time. The society of the old Empire that assembled there still recalled the glamour of bygone days by their elegance and their light and graceful conversation. I remember how my cousin, Countess Schoenborn, gave a reception for the former King of Bulgaria, that most intelligent, cultivated, and art-loving sovereign of our times, a reception the like of which would no longer be possible in Central Europe to-day. People who can move unselfconsciously and as if they were used to it in such a unique setting, where the walls are hung with the choicest masterpieces, are beginning to be a rarity nowadays.

At that time in Vienna I often used to meet in the house of mutual friends, the Generalissimus of the Austrian Army during the Great War, Count Conrad von Hoetzendorff. The fragile little man with the sparkling eyes that flashed from under thick white brows, impressed one immediately as a strong and wilful personality. He would throw himself enthusiastically into an argument, and he was as interested as a boy in every acute question. I can remember distinctly with what indignation he repudiated the suggestion that the Central Powers had brought about the War. That was not as simple as the Allied Press now would have it, he exclaimed. Then, with a rapid movement, the old Field-Marshal jumped up, went to the fireplace and suddenly squatting down, lit a match by rubbing it against his thigh and held it to a paper. "There," he said, "that's how the Allies imagine that we in Germany and Austria, 'like naughty boys,' set fire to the world. What ridiculous nonsense!" I thought at the time

that he might be right as to the main issue, but these words sounded strange from the lips of the man who had been the most zealous advocate of a preventative war against Italy before the great catastrophe.

In spite of these occasional meetings with interesting and clever individuals, Vienna became more and more unbearable to me. The city was weighed down by its past ; wherever one looked a chasm yawned between what had been and what existed to-day, and this paralysed all one's energy and activity. At that period the aimlessness and hopelessness of the Austria left over by St. Germain began to make itself manifest, the inner discouragement that drove the young people abroad and created the psychological conditions which brought about the end of Austria as an independent entity. Although I did my best to render justice to the virtues of the old Austria, I, with the majority of the young people of my time, was incapable of building up a future on the ruins of an irrecoverable past. Thus I had only one overmastering desire : to shake the dust of the moribund city, which was unable to survive its too mighty history, as speedily as possible from my shoes. So I learnt with relief and gladness that I had been transferred to Warsaw as an Attaché to our Legation.

With a few Danish and Swedish crowns in my pocket, which the financial department of the Chancellery had given me as journey money, I arrived in Warsaw on a cold December day in 1922. The station was surrounded by scores of young Poles and Jews waiting to pick up an odd job. As soon as I emerged from the station with my rather numerous suit-cases, I found myself surrounded by some twenty shouting and wildly gesticulating youths, who fought for the honour of conveying my luggage—covered with labels of foreign hotels—to its destination. The initial battle of words soon became one of actual blows, until a policeman appeared on the scene, distributed a few cuffs and oaths, and so re-established law and order. Then I trotted behind my luggage, which was drawn on a handcart by two Jews, through the crowded Marszalkowska towards the Austrian Legation. As all the hotels and private houses were overcrowded owing to the masses of people streaming to the new capital, I had to spend my first night in newly risen

Poland on a camp-bed which had been put up for me in the corner of an office of the Legation. My clothes hung over a string which I had stretched from one end of the room to the other fastened to a couple of filing cupboards. My shaving-glass was an old Russian ash-tray engraved with the double-headed eagle. My life as a diplomat had begun.

The following morning as, armed with my ash-tray, I was sneaking through the passage in scanty attire in quest of hot water, I was confronted by my new chief, the Minister, Nikolaus Post. He told me that I must accompany him officially to the Cathedral in order to assist at the requiem for the assassinated President, Narutowicz.

Poland was again in the throes of a serious crisis which appeared to menace the existence of the State. A short time prior to my arrival a constitutional law had been passed after a great struggle, which made the election of a President possible. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Narutowicz, the friend of Marshal Pilsudski, was elected on 8 December by the National Assembly, with the votes of the Leftist parties and the minorities, as President of Poland. This engendered tremendous indignation among the defeated National Democrats, who considered it as a betrayal of the sacred cause of Poland that the first President of the State actually appointed should owe his election partly to German and Jewish votes. As Narutowicz was driving to Parliament in order to take his oath for the Constitution, a furious Nationalist mob jeered at him as 'President of the Aliens,' and pelted him with mud and stones. On 16 December, as he was officially opening an exhibition of pictures, a fanatic, the artist Niewiadomski, shot him down. Covered with blood, the President collapsed at the feet of the British Minister, Sir William Max-Muller.

At that time it was impossible to hire a motor-car in Warsaw, so we drove in a carriage drawn by two black horses to the Cathedral, which was guarded by a police cordon. An official of the Polish Foreign Office accompanied us through a side-entrance into the choir of the Cathedral, where the majority of the members of the Diplomatic Corps were already assembled, clad in their resplendent old-world uniforms. The members of the Polish Government were seated on the opposite benches. The requiem lasted a long

time, so I had ample opportunity to study the physiognomies of my new colleagues and of the Polish Ministers. The faces of the Poles bore an expression of deep sorrow and serious reflection, but the diplomats' countenances betrayed nothing but utter boredom, which the mask of civility covered with varying results. The expression of lassitude increased on the faces of my new colleagues when a priest mounted the pulpit and delivered an oration in praise of the virtues of the dead man, which was interrupted by the loud sobbing of the populace. It was not difficult to see that the diplomats, these often highly paid observers of their governments, understood very little indeed of what was going on round them.

## CHAPTER SIX

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### THE DIPLOMAT

THE DIPLOMAT OF TO-DAY is, from a political point of view, a fossil, the forgotten emblem of a past when high politics were made in the ante-rooms of princes, when one exercised all one's ingenuity at deciphering a monarch's frown, and neither telegrams, telephones, nor journalists existed. The mighty ambassador who was furnished by his Sovereign with letters to the ruler of a foreign State, and with elastic instructions, who could form alliances and influence the world, is no more. His place has been taken by the timid, uncertain official who hangs on to his Government's apron-strings by the system of foreign trunk-calls, by the political postman who delivers the notes of his Government with a few explanatory words and transmits the answers. The personality he may possess can only find expression in political miniature work, in the careful smoothing-down and in hardly noticeable changes of nuance. Bismarck's maxim that ambassadors should keep in line like grenadiers, is more true than ever to-day. All this is aggravated by the fact that the contemporary diplomat has become more and more of a back number in respect of his technical accessories. Figuratively speaking, he is still driving in the mail-coach, while the modern journalist has already used the railway and the aeroplane for a long time. The diplomat is supposed, for reasons of economy, to use telephone and telegraph only in the most urgent cases ; he writes his reports later than the journalist, and can only send them once a week, sometimes even only twice a month, by courier, so that the products of

his political craftsmanship are usually out of date by the time they reach their destination.

One might be tempted to think that the maturity of his insight and the careful weighing of his judgment offered ample compensation for this slow mode of delivery. But according to my experience, this is not a rule, but an exception. The diplomat usually gets his information from three sources : official informations, the Press, and conversations with private individuals. The official informations which are passed on to him by the Foreign Office of the country to which he is accredited, should by rights be the most important. It is the time-honoured privilege of diplomacy to receive such information at first hand. As owing to the mistaken new order of Europe the relations between the nations are permanently poisoned by distrust and fear, such official information must usually be taken with a grain of salt. So the art of diplomacy consists not so much in procuring this information as in explaining it and commenting on it. Without a commentary by an expert, most of the official communiqués and announcements are very nearly useless. In order to be capable of providing the necessary commentary, the diplomat must have a great deal of knowledge ; not only must he be familiar with the country, its foreign policy, and its inner-political conditions, he must also understand the psychology of the minister or the official who has given him the information. This kind of analysis can be exceedingly difficult and demands a maximum of knowledge even from mature diplomats who are well versed in their particular field of action. Most of them fail here, as they have neither the knowledge nor the psychological insight that would be needed.

The information provided by the Press, which should be the most fruitful source of news for the diplomat, presents him with an even more difficult problem. To read a newspaper in order to extract the politically valuable information and gauge the psychology of the nation, represents if not an art, at least a craft which, like everything else, must be mastered by study and hard work. The first condition is that the reader should know something of the inside workings of the Press, of how a news item or an information comes into being, before he can read a paper critically and with

advantage. This condition is lacking with the majority of diplomats, as they are usually unfamiliar to a frightening extent with the newspaper world, partly owing to their social prejudices. Every attaché ought to serve an apprenticeship in the political department of a newspaper or a news agency before he is sent to his first post abroad, so as to familiarize himself with the foundations of journalism, which is actually in such close relationship to diplomacy.

Yet what avails the greatest familiarity with the technique of the Press and of journalism, if a man does not understand the language of the people amongst which he is to work as a political observer? It is incomprehensible that so little stress is laid on this natural necessity in the diplomatic service of most countries. It is seen with satisfaction and mentioned with praise if a young diplomat who has been accredited to the capital of a medium-sized or small state actually learns its language, but it is not made a condition for his further advancement. I have known diplomats who spent ten and more years at the same post without even attempting to learn the language of the country. I feel that this proves an entirely erroneous view of the professional duties of a diplomat, which consist of transmitting correct information to his Government and attempting to win the sympathies of the nation amongst whom he lives for his country. This cannot be done without a knowledge of the language, and the omission to learn it is often looked upon as an indifference verging on discourtesy. A foreign correspondent who did not speak the language of the country where he works is unthinkable, unless his chief ambition were to lose his post as rapidly as possible.

It would be an exaggeration to affirm that the average diplomat is not conscious of the disadvantage of being unable to understand the language and read books and papers. Yet the so-called social duties take up such a vast proportion of his time that he can barely save the few hours he needs to attend to important despatches. Therefore various expedients are used at the Legations in order to study newspapers and pamphlets. Either a Press-attaché is employed, who reads a daily report, or somebody reads out the headings of the leading articles and it is decided which ones are to be translated ; or the Legation relies

on extracts from some German, French, or English paper which is published in the town in question *ad usum delphini* by the Government. It is not necessary to have very much imagination in order to picture to oneself how and according to what principles a paper of that sort is made up and the extracts from the native language are edited. Yet these propagandist distortions form the basis of diplomatic reports.

I have mentioned conversations with private individuals as a third source of information. The value of these depends entirely with whom the diplomat in question consorts and on his capacity of inspiring confidence and making friends. In the new states and in the numerous old ones that have suffered a social reorganization, the diplomat prefers the ancient society to the new. That is the reason why he scarcely contacts the leading strata of the new order; he has superficial relations with official personalities and more intimate ones with the 'smart set,' which consists of aristocrats, *jeunesse dorée*, a few inevitable spongers and the other diplomats. Many diplomats also suffer from a social inferiority-complex and are afraid to cultivate the new society lest they might appear second-rate in the eyes of some socially important but otherwise entirely negligible old lady.

The result of this choice to meet only the most exclusive circles, which is demonstrated by the fact that one sees the same people three times a day in the small capitals, is a complete short circuit of informations and political gossip. In twenty-four hours at the most every item of news returns, more or less distorted, to its original source. If a stone, in the form of one of the usual crises, is thrown into this stagnant pond, the resulting movement is quite tremendous—for a short time. The *chers collègues* ring each other up, they send secretaries on a round from one friendly diplomatic mission to the other in order to extract some information; but the result is usually meagre and not worth the effort expended to obtain it, which cannot be otherwise, considering the nature of the whole system.

The reports of diplomatic representatives of totalitarian states have a special source of errors to contend with—the preference to report chiefly that which those at home

like to hear ; it is the easiest way and it does not jeopardize one's post. So the reports are fitted into the Procrustes-bed of fixed ideologies and preconceived ideas, even if Truth, in whose service the diplomat is supposed to draw his pay, should be the loser. Report only that which fits into the surroundings ! That is a dangerous maxim which has led to increasing the difficulties and misunderstandings between governments.

Yet the task of a diplomat is not only to write reports. He should also be a worthy representative of the culture and the especial virtues of his country, an interpreter and commentator not only for the political, but for all the important events of his native land, a promoter of mutual economic relations and last, but not least, a protector for his colony. It is easy to see that only a paragon could do justice to all these different demands. The result is that even the best diplomats must fail in one or the other respect. If they remain at one post for a long time and really penetrate into the mentality of a foreign people, they are apt to become so impregnated with the ideology of their temporary residence that they lose the inner contact with their homeland. Yet their exceptional position does not allow them to be really at home where they are, and so they slide gradually into one of those uprooted international communities, which are found on a lower scale in the class of *wagon-lit* guards and hotel porters. The diplomatic profession is under the curse of Ishmael. If, however, a diplomat is left at his post only a short time, it usually happens that he is transferred just when he is beginning to do valuable work. Experience shows that every minister or ambassador takes two years to find his feet. The way out of this dilemma seems to have been found by the British Government, which changes ministers and ambassadors frequently, but leaves a certain category of diplomatic officials often for decades at the same post to serve as experts on the country and advisors to the chief of the moment.

In Warsaw I found, in unadulterated form, all the disadvantages and weak points which characterize the diplomatic organization of to-day. With a few noteworthy exceptions, the diplomats there were an ignorant community, who basked in the glory which was theirs in a country that

treasured the presence of a diplomatic corps as a living proof of its newly acquired independence. The ladies of Polish Society lionized the diplomats, who provided a decorative element at their parties, and the representatives of the Allies, especially of France, were most in demand.

In spite of this attitude of the Poles, the majority of the members of Warsaw's diplomatic corps was decidedly anti-Polish. That was curious, as the diplomats in small capitals usually form a collective good opinion of the country. This sort of collective opinion cannot be formed in great capitals like London or Paris, where the diplomats are scattered and see little of each other. The Warsaw diplomatic corps was only too ready to listen to the frivolous talk of the Polish season-state, which was rapidly moving towards its fourth partition. However, I found the arguments that were forwarded to support this theory were so childish and the knowledge of the Polish problem which they showed, so superficial, that after a few days of conversations with only my diplomatic colleagues, I gave up all hope of ever acquiring real familiarity with my field of work by these methods.

Therefore I decided to lose no time in making a thorough study of the Polish language. It is not an easy language for a German to learn, as with the exception of a few words derived from the Latin and German, the root of every word has to be memorized anew. Also the profusion of apparently meaningless strings of consonants is very confusing when one first looks at a page printed in Polish—a fact which caused Balzac to make the witty remark that the Poles were apparently trying to protect their rare vowels by these fortresses of consonants.

As we all know, there are countless methods of learning a language. Firstly, the time-honoured system of learning by heart senseless sentences formed with incoherent words, like : 'Desiderius taught a pig to blow the flute.' There is a Polish Grammar which contains this extraordinary dialogue, freely adapted from Goethe's poem 'Mignon.'

'Know'st thou the land where the lemons flower, midst darkling leaves the golden orange glows?' 'No,' the Grammar continued, 'I know neither the land nor the lemons, nor the golden orange: I only know the potato.'

This work had at least the advantage of introducing the scholar in poetical form to the imaginative concepts of the Polish agrarian.

Then there are Correspondence Courses by which one can study a foreign language alone ; there the language is treated as though it were a puzzle to be solved by ingenuity. There is a method which is called psycho-technical. This saves one the trouble of learning anything, but one soon finds that one cannot even if one wanted to. One of my friends tried to learn Spanish by that method, but even to-day his command of the language is restricted to one word : *despabiladeras*, which means candle-snuffers. A Saxon acquaintance had the crazy idea to buy a medium-sized Polish-German dictionary and start from the letter A to learn page for page by heart. With Teutonic persistence he reached Z after a year, and he actually acquired a fair knowledge of the language. Naturally his command of language was extremely queer at the beginning of his studies, while he was still enmeshed in the first letters of the alphabet.

Other methods are to visit a Berlitz school, to take courses by gramophone records and last, but not least, the system rightly preferred by young men, of having a living grammar, which combines duty and pleasure in the most charming manner. Already Goethe was familiar with this method when, long ago in Rome, he softly fingered by night on the bare back of his love 'the sounding hexameters.'

I chose a less classical method I have thought out for myself, thanks to which I attained my aim of being able to read Polish sufficiently in less than eight weeks. I engaged a young man who had perfect command both of German and Polish ; every morning he came to my flat with a packet of newspapers under his arm. I began by reading short notices about arrivals and departures, accidents, and deaths, and after I had learnt the rules of pronunciation, I used the young man merely as a living dictionary without ever making notes. Every Polish word I did not know he would translate into German with lightening rapidity. I soon learnt by experience that one can memorize words if one has heard them being translated about a dozen times. This simple method has the great

advantage of saving one the time and trouble of looking up a word in the dictionary. After a short time I was able to enlarge my daily Polish reading considerably and in two months I could read any political item without difficulty.

I would not say that this is the way to acquire a thorough knowledge of a language—that cannot be done without work and strenuous application. But I am convinced that my method enables one to acquire in the minimum of time, that rudimentary knowledge of a language which is absolutely necessary in order to penetrate into the secrets of a foreign people. Within a few weeks I began to understand the Polish world. But only after I had read papers, magazines, and a few carefully selected books I gained the necessary knowledge of the psychological premises of the Poles' mode of thinking. Then I had countless conversations with Poles of every class and profession and so I acquired a clear idea of all the hopes and desires, loves and hates, beliefs and doubts of this passionate, excitable, and highly gifted race.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

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### SIDELIGHTS ON POLAND

THERE IS A NEW science in Germany supervised by a clever General, which was much talked about for a time; namely, 'Geo-politics.' It represents an ingenious attempt to explain the foreign policy of States and the political tension between nations as a result of their geographical position. Like all clever theories, this idea of explaining the fate of peoples by their position on the map is unsatisfactory. Life is too complex and variegated to be compressed into a set formula. Yet from Vaihinger's great work on the philosophy of the 'as if,' we have learnt that such theories can be of great value as illuminating hypotheses.

With this reservation, I should like to advance the theory that the policy of the Polish State and the special characteristics of the Polish nation can, in fact, be explained by Poland's situation between east and west. The political fate of the country, since she took her place in history, was decided by the fact that she was placed between two powerful neighbours without the protection of natural frontiers. Unlike the French and the Italians, the Poles have no mountains, rivers, or oceans to protect them from neighbouring races. Their only bulwark is the Carpathian mountain-range in the south-west, and that does not separate their country from the lands of the powerful Germans or Russians, but only from the small Slovakian nation. The whole history of Poland, which is far more closely interwoven with the fate of individual Poles than is the case with most other nations, has been, right down to our own time, a saga of heroic self-assertion against her two

formidable neighbours. Seen from the 'geo-political' and the historical angle, the occasional occurrence of Polish Imperialism and the aggressive Polish nationalism is a product of fear, and often of an exaggerated inferiority-complex with regard to Germany.

A nation which has been placed by destiny in so precarious a position can only survive by a belief in its own particular mission. The foundation of this belief is linked up with the Pole's national religion—Roman Catholicism with a quite individual degree of intensity. As the Eastern Germans with whom the Poles come most frequently into contact, are almost invariably Lutherans, and as the Russians exclusively profess the Orthodox faith, so the Poles see themselves as the standard-bearers of Catholicism amid a surrounding sea of heresy. The ancient demarcation-line between the Roman and the Byzantine civilizations which also constitutes the frontier between Occident and Orient, runs through the eastern portion of Poland, along the so-called Curzon-line. Whereas in the west the national frontier is decided by the opposition of Germans to Poles, that is to say, Teutons to Slavs, in the east, notwithstanding the gradual national awakening of Ukrainians and White Russians, the dividing line is principally based on religion. Religious, rather than national loyalties, are the deciding factor. There people speak of the Polish, the Russian, or the Ukrainian faith, and appear to think that a person is born with his religion as a Tartar is born with a yellow skin. The struggle about schools in the west of Poland becomes the struggle about creed in the east. The Polish dialects merged into those of the White Russians, so that the peasants in the frontier-districts often do not know which language they do speak. When you ask them, they say with conviction that they speak 'the language of here,' and whether they call themselves Poles or Russians depend on the church they attend. Eastern Galicia contains some four million Ukrainians who are Greek-Catholics; this creed is linked with the Roman Catholic Church, but it is nevertheless ritually and culturally Byzantine. In spite of this fact, the religious dividing line which runs through Eastern Poland is exceedingly strong. The Poles will never break through the wall of Byzantinism which impedes their expansion in

the east, despite the tremendous blows struck by Bolshevism at the Orthodox Church. In spite of this, or perhaps for this reason, the Poles look upon their country as entrusted with a national messianic mission which has for its goal the spread of Western culture in the East.

This Polish Messianism is one of the strangest phenomena in the mentality of the nation. We can trace certain Messianic ideas in the national Imperialism of most nations, while on the other hand Imperialism seeks its moral justification in the belief that Providence has entrusted it with a unique mission. With Poland the case is different. The Poles lost their country in 1795 and the instinct of self-preservation led them to adopt the idea of their Mission, which was a typical product of the Polish *émigrés*, most of them in Paris during the nineteenth century. Among these *émigrés* were the greatest poets of Poland: Mickiewicz, Slowacki, and Krasinski. It was in Paris that Mickiewicz wrote the greatest poem in the Polish language, the immortal 'Pan Tadeusz.' One wonders what turn the intellectual life of Germany or France would have taken if Goethe and Schiller or Racine and Molière had been forced to live in exile. During those years of exile in Paris the conception, so typical of Polish mentality, arose of Poland as the crucified saviour among the nations, the 'Copernicus of the moral world.'

Under the influence of this Messianic complex the peculiar idea developed that God and the Madonna stood in an especial relationship to Poland, so that the Poles came to look upon themselves as the favourite sons of the Mother of God. Certainly this was a special Polish version of the Blessed Virgin, as crowned Queen of Poland throned in the miraculous image of Czenstochova. She it was that led the troops of Jagiello—undeterred by his heathen auxiliaries—at the first battle of Tannenberg in 1410. She it was that defended Czenstochova successfully against the Swedes, and according to some imaginative Poles, she performed the 'Miracle of the Vistula' in the great battle against the Russians in 1920.

They tell a story in Poland of a free-thinking national democrat who always removed his hat when he passed a statue of the Madonna and explained this habit by saying

that the Blessed Virgin was a good Polish patriot. All this goes to show that there is an element of national paganism in Polish Catholicism. It is clear that a national faith of this kind, often bordering on heresy, cannot be the basis of a truly Christian, Catholic all-embracing faith.

It would be false to assume that the restoration of Poland as a State could effect any great change in the fundamental mental attitude of the Polish people. Even a modern Polish author like Kaden-Bandrowski still speaks of his people as the Romans of the East who live on the confines of two different worlds. This conception is clearly the echo, in the lay mind, of the Christian Messianism of the Polish classics. All this goes to prove that it is a national necessity, a *conditio sine qua non* for the Poles to practise an extremely Latinized form of Catholicism, as they see the aim of the Roman Catholic Church as synonymous with the secular aims of the Polish State. This national attitude explains the very high position occupied by the clergy in Poland. Even the often very free-thinking Polish intelligentsia never fails to treat the priests with respectful reverence. This emphasis on the Roman rite as nationally opposed to the Greek-Slav Orthodox faith is the basis of that inexplicable, vague kinship with the Romance peoples, which the Poles are so fond of stressing.

The wall that divides Byzantium from Rome afforded ample protection intellectually and in matters of religion, but on the secular plane this obstacle was easily overcome by the spirit of Russian indiscipline and Oriental licence. Marshal Pilsudski, the great creator of the new Poland, made the profound observation after the murder of President Narutowicz—that the spirit of the East had come to life in the assassin. And assuredly it was a gesture of Oriental feeling and not of Western Christianity that covered the grave of the condemned murderer Niewiadomski with the flowers and wreaths of nationalistic demonstrators. Respect for law and order and most especially the Western conception of universal equality in the eyes of the law has not yet penetrated into Poland. It is not to be expected that this should come about so soon. Ancient chronicles tell us how in the eighteenth century the peasants, more like beasts than men, led a miserable existence in their

wretched hovels and that when they met a nobleman or a stranger on the high road, they fled in terror to hide in the ditches. The memory of oppression such as this cannot die in a day. The descendants of these miserable serfs, many of whom are in positions of power and importance to-day, have barely felt a breath of the Western spirit of individual freedom. Their grandfathers were oppressed, to-day they oppress others. It is their idea of the way of the world.

It is obvious that Russian rule constituted a further retardation of Poland's mental evolution towards liberty. In the old Austria the Poles found for the first time that even the weak can obtain justice. With amazement they saw what appeared incredible—that even the strong had to bow before the law. Such a thing had never happened in chivalrous Poland, where every nobleman considered it his natural privilege to ride rough shod over inconvenient decisions of the courts.

In the Russian part of Poland the ancient spirit of anarchy continued to flourish. Things were not done by force, nobody hired bands of ruffians to carry out a miniature *coup d'état*; bribery was the weapon. It was now the turn of the wealthy business magnate of the nineteenth century to override the law. This was the spirit in which a Polish magnate sent his horsemen to intimidate a judge, or an industrialist from Lodz gave a bribe of a few roubles and sent his trucks filled with textiles free of charge to Irkutsk in Siberia by rail. It is the ancient Slav spirit of privilege, the conviction equally alive in rulers and ruled, that the law is only enforced against the weak. Those who are in power, great and small, consider it derogatory to their dignity to keep the law. With proud disdain they break the law on principle and look upon the privilege of so doing as an ever-fresh confirmation of their power. This explains why in Eastern Europe, contrary to what happens in Anglo-Saxon countries, the repercussions of any infringement of the law or act of force are political and not personal. Humanity is used as a vehicle for politics. Thus, when Pilsudski had several dozen politicians of the Opposition arrested and transported to the fortress of Brest-Litowsk, only a few hundred demonstrators protested. The nation knew its leaders, and thought—with a certain justification—that every

one of them would have done the same if he had been in power. If the Pole no longer kisses the hand that strikes him, he still retains a certain admiration for anyone who is powerful enough to strike with impunity.

This psychology of the emancipated Slav is, of course, still frequently to be found in Poland. It is also a heritage of the people's unhappy historical past, of which every Pole is always conscious. Thus he sees every event that touches his Fatherland through a historical, romantic and nationalistic haze in which the vague form of the Polish Messiah occasionally reveals itself. The ever-present memory of the time when there was no State, of the days of servitude, gives Polish nationalism an ever-fresh impetus, so that it takes a form sometimes admirable, sometimes grotesque and occasionally actually ridiculous.

It is matter for admiration that the Poles did not lose their language and their national individuality during the four generations their country was divided and subjected to Russian and Prussian oppression. And no justly thinking person can fail to admire the energy with which they built up a new State of their own in the years following the War. The national uprising of 1920, when the armies of Soviet Russia stood before the gates of Warsaw, will always remain a glorious page, not only in the history of Poland, but of Europe. On the other hand, the political decline of Poland during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the disruption of the State during the nineteenth, have left indelible traces on the character of the nation, which make it impossible for the Poles to take anything but a rudely distorted view of their opponents.

When I first went to Poland an internal political struggle was raging between the parties of the Right and the Left. Simultaneously a campaign of hate was being waged against Germany and everything German, to which were added occasional anti-Czech and anti-Russian movements. No Western European can imagine the unrestrained language with which members of Parliament, political agitators, and the Press attacked the opponent of the moment. The principle which was later to penetrate into Central Europe—not to allow your opponent a shred of decency—was a matter of course, and there was no need of a 'National Bible'

to promote it. The Polish character is a strange mixture of Slav passivity and aggressive nationalism. Poland's real national anthem, the Dombrowski-March, composed in 1796, begins with the pathetic exclamation which has become so famous: 'Poland is not yet lost.' This song fired the courage of the Polish legionaries who rallied to the banner of Bonaparte in Northern Italy. The entire history of the soul of Poland is contained in those few words, breathing courage, patriotism, and enthusiasm, and yet overshadowed by the sadness and resignation of 'not yet' and 'lost.'

The second song which the Poles are wont to sing on solemn occasions, especially if these are in some way directed against Germany, is the 'Rota,' which means 'oath.' This song, the author of which was a woman, forcefully declares that the Polish people will never give up the soil that bore them. Further, that a German shall never again spit in the face of a Pole! I remember that in 1926, quite a considerable time after the restoration of Poland, a great quarrel arose about the 'Rota' and violently exercised public opinion. The whimsical conceit of spitting in the face, so the critics maintained, was no longer up to date. This caused great indignation among the fanatics, who could not be made to see why this song, so invigorating to the national spirit, should be ostracized. Even a strictly Catholic paper, edited by a priest, published a leader to the effect that the very voice and spirit of the Polish nation resounded in this anthem. The campaign against the 'Rota' was led by those who wanted to establish good relations with Germany at any price, and were now falling over one another to be polite to her. This tragi-comical quarrel was finally composed by the highly gifted writer, Adolf Nowaczyński, the chief leader of anti-German sentiment and—significantly—the son of German parents. He did this in a very original way. To everybody's surprise, he declared against the 'Rota,' on the ground that to the citizens of a Great Power, the mere idea of rejoicing at the thought of not being spat at should be intolerable. The Pole of to-day might well demand that if a German must spit in the presence of a Pole, then the distance between them must not be less than two yards, and that even so he should spit on the ground!

The nineteenth-century policy of the Russians and the Germans towards the Poles has left deep scars on the soul of Poland, which will take a long time to heal. Oppression led to hatred, hatred to fierce outbursts, which again led to further oppression. The German was represented, regardless of his opinions, as the most savage and dangerous enemy of Poland, and therefore of humanity. I remember a proclamation that appeared in October 1924 in the official paper of the west Polish town Rawitsh, when the Polish Air League was advocating the collection of funds for a Polish air fleet. The article affirmed that the Prussians, dreaming of a bloody and terrible revenge, had always in the past destroyed all human life with savage delight whenever they had descended like loathsome locusts on a country. The robber Knights of the Teutonic order had desecrated the churches by shooting at sacred images and tabernacles. They had hanged and shot priests, old men, women, and children, raped nuns, and, during the War, they had, in the mountains of the Eiffel, roasted the corpses of fallen soldiers in order to obtain axle-grease.

The examples I have quoted, and which could be added to, may be coarse, but they are very typical of the nationalism of that small middle class of Poland, whose most characteristic representatives are the high-school professor and the editor of a provincial paper. Just as the old Austria used to be called the country of the hundred families, so the new Poland might be described as the State of the five hundred provincial editors. Only after Pilsudski's *coup d'état* did the balance of power shift, but without effecting a great change in the sources of intellectual influence.

Above the caste of the nationalistic middle class there lies, like a thin patina, the high aristocracy, which, in contrast to the lesser aristocracy which has merged into the *bourgeoisie*, continues to play a certain part in Society and diplomacy. The land-owning aristocracy has numerous old family connections abroad, although these are gradually disappearing. It is, however, a matter of tradition in these circles not to recognize the idea of extreme nationalism. The aristocracy plays no part in the intellectual and political orientation of the people, although its representatives are frequently pushed into the foreground on international

occasions. One reason for the small political influence of the aristocracy is the fact that, owing to the perpetual threat of agrarian reforms, it is forced to seek the protection of whichever party is in power.

The backbone of the Polish nation is represented by the peasants, who form nearly two-thirds of the entire population. They are the inexhaustible reservoir from which Poland draws and will continue to draw her vitality. The great virtues of the Polish people—enthusiasm, great natural intelligence, and the admirable capacity of bearing extreme want without a murmur, are most clearly defined in the peasantry. The only reason why the peasants have not attained a leading political position in the State is that their ignorance forces them into a passive position. Approximately half the Polish peasantry can neither read nor write, and 75 per cent of the female population is actually illiterate. The Ministry of Education has always been kept on short rations by the Polish Government, so that an average of a quarter to half a million children remain without tuition, owing to the lack of schools. The struggle against illiteracy is further aggravated by the fact that many people who have learnt to read and write at school forget how to do so later in life. It is believed that about a quarter of Poland's illiterates have thus relapsed. Polish statistics on illiterates are somewhat misleading, as every peasant able to sign his name to a document instead of putting the usual three crosses to it, but who is incapable of putting word to paper, affirms with pride that he is able to write.

Next to ignorance, poverty is an important factor in forging the chains of the Polish peasant. The great majority are small farmers or crofters and must support their generally numerous families. Prices for agrarian products are extremely low, so that it is not surprising that the peasantry has centred all its hopes on agrarian reform which, up to now, has been slow in materializing. The battle-cry against the land-owning nobles is still the most popular slogan in every Polish village. The Polish peasant will take some time to forget that he owes his liberation from the bonds of serfdom in which the nobility had held him for hundreds of years, to the foreign governments who ruled the Polish territory during the last century. What he has gained from

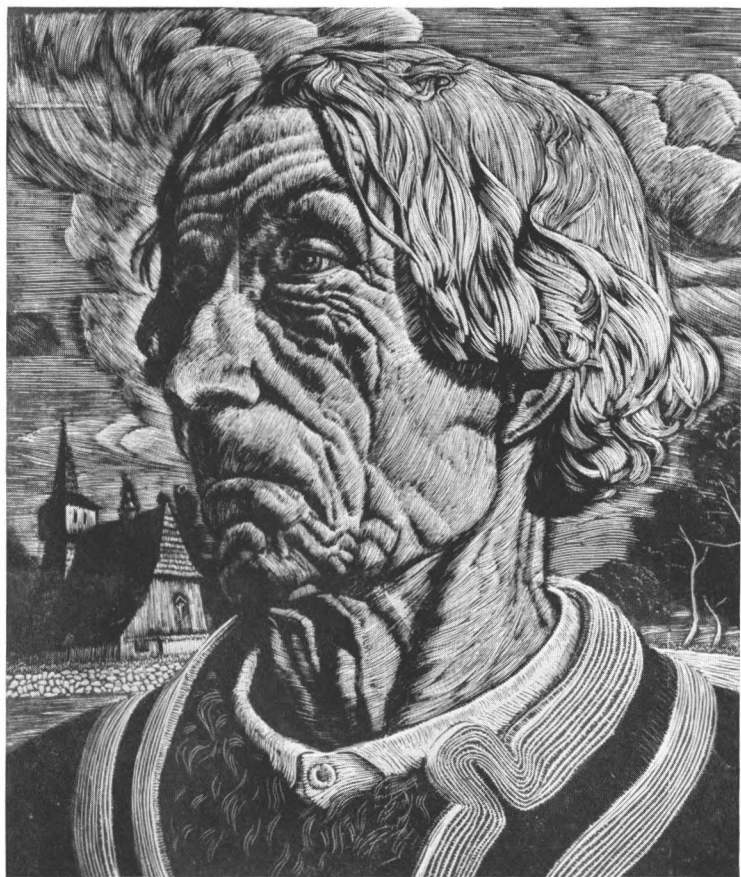
the great landowners in the country, he owes merely to his own initiative, and not to the insight of the ruling caste. None the less, the Polish peasantry, with admirable patriotism, has supported the Polish national cause, but in the hope of creating, in conjunction with the working classes, a country of peasants and workmen. This development has caused the Polish peasant to be patriotic, but unlike the *bourgeois* intelligentsia which actually rules the State, he is an enemy of nationalistic slogans. Notably in the territories which were formerly under Austrian rule the peasants have retained an affectionate respect for the ancient Imperial régime.

Eight years after the end of the Great War, a noteworthy incident occurred in the small Galician town of Zablotow, which gives eloquent testimony of the temper of the population at that time. Two officials of the Polish State monopoly for spirits somehow found their way into the little town, and saw to their amazement a monument to the Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria on the principal square in front of the Town Hall. It is not surprising that the couple immediately reported their strange discovery to the Vojevode at Stanislau, who then gave orders to the local *Starost* to remove this memorial of Austrian tyranny as speedily as possible. After about a week the following amazing answer was received. The inhabitants of Zablotow refused to allow the monument to be removed, as they still revered the defunct Emperor. The Vojevode, rightly incensed, gave strict orders that the monument was to disappear within ten days. Thereupon the inhabitants of Zablotow formed a committee which sat and deliberated for a week, as to how the orders of the Vojevode could be carried out in the most dignified manner. At last they agreed to lay the statue of the good Emperor into a coffin and to bury it in a secluded spot in front of the cemetery wall. This was actually done. The removal of the Emperor's monument took the form of a great funeral, which was attended by the entire population of the town. The band of the fire brigade played the Hungarian Rakoczy March while the monument was being taken down, and an old soldier, who had fought at the battle of Koeniggratz in 1866, delivered a solemn oration. Then the Emperor's statue was laid in a coffin bedecked with flowers, and the

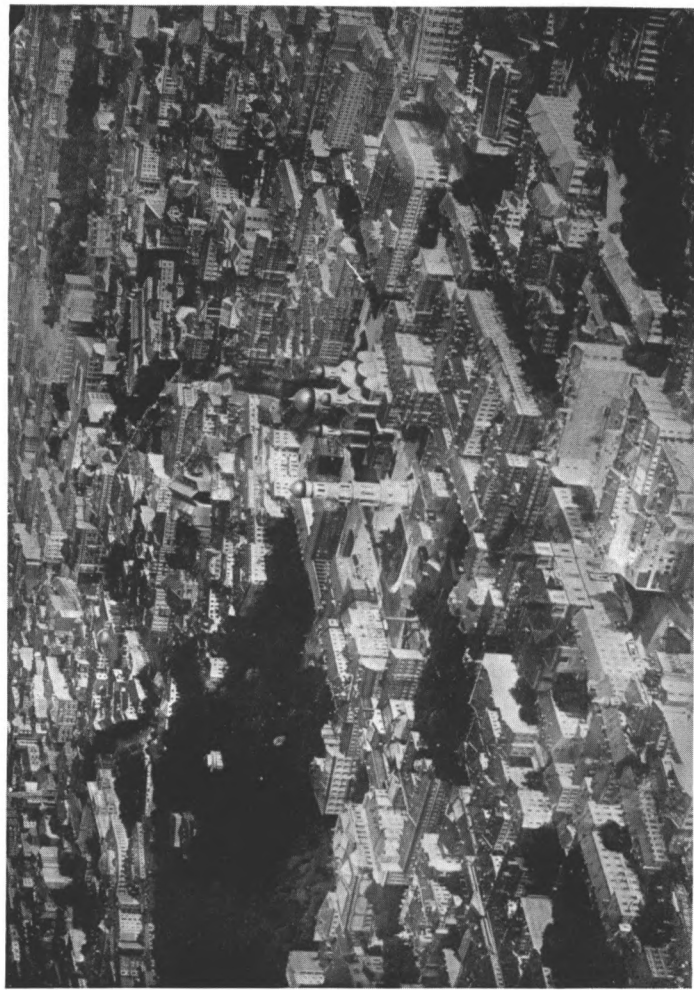
funeral procession started on its way to the cemetery. Arrived at the grave, a few of the local dignitaries delivered the requisite speeches, a choir of schoolgirls sang hymns and the population deposited their wreaths. Thus the unique ceremony ended, another proof of the fact that real life can produce far more fantastic incidents than the strangest stories by Poe or E. T. A. Hoffmann. The town of Zablotow continued to mourn for the whole of that day. The restaurants were closed, and, as the chronicler relates, a common sorrow united all races, parties, and classes.

The Polish peasant is generally very devout and has a childlike affection for the Christian faith of the Roman Catholic Church. Naturally his low standard of education causes him to be far more impressed by the Church ritual, by the splendour of High Mass with its organ music, singing, incense, and coloured vestments than by the tenets of the catechism, which he sometimes construes in a peculiar way of his own. It is no exaggeration to speak of a Polish 'vernacular Catholicism' which often borders on idolatry. The black Madonna of Czenstochova and the local saints of Poland play a much more important part in the religious consciousness of the peasants than the living God. Of course, similar phases can be observed in all nations and religions at all times. Hundreds of thousands of devout pilgrims from all over the country flock to Czenstochova every year. Led by their priests, they travel by special trains or wander for days along the dusty high roads to the distant place of pilgrimage. When one encounters one of these processions of poorly-clad pilgrims of both sexes, who pass merrily singing their hymns, one is reminded of Nietzsche's malicious saying that pilgrimages are to the poor what trips to the seaside are to the rich.

A few years before the War a grim tragedy was enacted in Czenstochova, which for some time endangered even the popularity of the Holy Shrine. Flaunting the rules of his Order, one of the monks kept a mistress, and as fate would have it, she awakened the desires of another monk. Naturally this led to rivalry, and during a heated quarrel the first monk stabbed his rival. But he was a priest, so he gave his dying victim the absolution—anxious to assure the life eternal to the man he had robbed of earthly life.



Polish peasant.  
Woodcut by W. Skoczylas.



Warsaw in 1922.  
In the centre, Russian Cathedral later pulled down by the Poles.

The belief in miracles, ignorance, and superstition are usually to be found in close proximity to one another. As in Southern Europe the Polish peasants still believe firmly in the efficacy of sorcery, invocations, and the evil eye. Everywhere paganism is interblended with Christian conceptions. Collectors of European folk-lore would find a profusion of material in Poland. I remember reading, in a Warsaw paper, the report of an incident which appears almost medieval, but which took place in the village of Wieliczew.

A peasant named Stachnik had taken the advice of a quack and had decided, with the assistance of his son-in-law and a few neighbours, to lift the curse which a certain Josephine Soltys had laid on his ailing wife. The peasants forced their way into the hut of the woman Soltys and dragged her to the home of her supposed victim, where they enacted the following horrible ceremony. They struck the unfortunate witch on the head and face and knelt with all their weight on her body until she began to vomit a stream of blood. They then caught the blood in a bowl specially prepared for the purpose and smeared it all over the ailing woman, ending their brutal exorcism by sprinkling holy water over both women, the patient and the poor victim of their superstition.

It is not even necessary to travel into the country to observe strange scenes of a superstition worthy of the Dark Ages. The population of the capital is little more advanced. In 1925 the inhabitants of a suburb of Warsaw, Mokotow, were seized with great excitement because a Jewess had given birth to an unusually ugly brat with some kind of physical abnormality. The rumour immediately spread that the woman had been consorting with an incubus and had borne a devil. A great crowd collected before the house where the Jewess was lying, with the intention of lynching her, and the police had great trouble in saving the unfortunate woman from the fanaticism of the people.

My servant, a simple-minded and excellent girl from the country, told me the story (which also appeared in the cheap papers under enormous headlines) in a voice that shook with emotion. She ended by saying that this was probably a

sign that the world was soon coming to an end. When she had gone marketing that morning, she had noticed that the birth of the devil at Mokotow had already caused the price of vegetables to go up. Didn't I think it might be wise to lay in provisions pending the approaching end of the world? I explained that even a whole bag of potatoes would not help us much on Judgment Day, so that the best thing we could do was to trust in Providence. Also, I assured her, I had reason to believe that the end of the world had been put off. In the meantime she must go on marketing, cooking, and cleaning the rooms as usual—and I am glad to say that she conscientiously followed my advice.

It would be a mistake to assume that anyone who has spent a considerable time in Eastern Europe would be struck by the incongruity of a ludicrous conversation of this kind in an apartment furnished with every modern device. The charm of the Near East in Europe is the perpetual contrast between a primitive closeness to the soil and the refinements of civilization and luxury. The educated Pole is one of the best types that the population of the Occident has produced. His courtesy and his social *savoir-faire* are as enchanting as his hospitality is boundless. Even to-day, with Poles of every class, the fine old proverb still holds good: '*Gość w domu, Bóg w domu*' ('A guest in the house is God in the house'). Until a short while ago it was customary at Easter-time to visit even the houses of strangers in order to taste the Easter ham, which had been blessed, and the traditional cheese-cakes. Everyone could count on a cordial reception. The hostess had, according to an ancient Polish custom, to share a slice of hard-boiled egg with the guest as a symbol of welcome.

Their very courtesy, which sometimes becomes too polished, has given the Poles among other nations the reputation of insincerity, even of hypocrisy. According to my observations this reproach is unjustified—social observances are simply different in the east of Europe to those in the west. Goethe's often-quoted phrase, 'In Germany you lie if you are polite,' can be altered to fit our case by saying that in Poland you lie in order to be polite. One evening I was visiting a night club fashionable at the time in Warsaw, and found myself greeted with overwhelming cordiality by

a man I knew slightly, a former Polish landowner from the Ukraine, who had rather come down in the world. He was a little intoxicated, and launched into questions of how our mutual friend Sigmund was, the one who played the piano so wonderfully. With tears in his eyes, he declared that he would never forget the hours he had spent at Sigmund's, when the latter played the piano and I the violin in so masterly a fashion ! He bent his head and closed his eyes, making expressive gestures with his right arm and fingering an imaginary fiddle with his left hand, all this to symbolize my incomparable virtuosity. Now I knew Sigmund and admired his piano-playing, but never in my life had I tucked a violin under my chin ! I remonstrated as best I could, but he determinedly ignored my protests and continued to extol my marvellous playing. I had been in Eastern Europe long enough to realize that this was his peculiar but very amiable way of conveying to me that he was not averse to partaking of a good drink, which his own means no longer permitted. We got on splendidly for the remainder of the evening, and my Ukrainian friend found it no longer necessary to praise my fiddling.

Social intercourse in Poland is governed by amiability, fantasy, and sublimated eroticism, and ruled far more by women than is the case in the West. Much has been written about the Polish woman. She has the reputation of exceptional beauty and exquisite elegance, and the French authors, in their rather superficial way, have often praised her as the '*française septentrionale*.' This comparison, which postulates the Frenchwoman to be the finest type in the world, is misleading, but there is no doubt that Polish women have an incomparable charm. They are past mistresses in the art of subtle flirtation, and their conversation has that light, delicate, and imaginative quality which has always been the hall-mark of an advanced degree of civilisation. At the time when Poland was under foreign domination, the Polish women were often the protagonists and preservers of the national ideals. Nowadays they have wisely withdrawn from politics and limit their activities to purely feminine matters, where their rule is uncontested. A beautiful Polish lady once said to me that a Frenchwoman behaves like a lady in the drawing-room, like a cook in the kitchen, and

like a courtesan in the bedroom. The Pole, on the other hand, acted like a courtesan in the drawing-room, a lady in the kitchen, and a cook in the bedroom! This witty comparison is a little exaggerated, but there is no doubt that Frenchwomen are far better housewives than Poles, whose domestic arrangements are usually characterized by artistic confusion. The sausages are to be found in the bathroom, suspended side by side with the husband's razor-strop. The bath itself, the waste-pipes of which happen to be out of order, is filled with shoes. A certain amount of practice is necessary in order to turn on the electric light, as the switches are usually loose. A string is stretched right across the drawing-room, where the lady of the house hangs up her silk stockings to dry. The table in the dining-room remains permanently laid, as one or other of the numerous members of the family is sure to sit down at any hour of the day to a meal, which, for all anyone knows, may be lunch or dinner.

Even in the restaurants it is hard to define the time-limit between the two chief meals. In Warsaw, where Russian habits prevail, this is reached at a quarter to seven in the evening. At that hour the first foreigner may be seen arriving to order his dinner, while several tables are still occupied by Poles talking at the top of their voices, smoking countless cigarettes, and finishing off the lunch they began at half-past four, with black and probably cold coffee—and vodka.

But it is futile to sit in judgment on these superficial irregularities, as so many foreigners are fond of doing. We must take nations as we find them. Even though the Pole may not have attained to that barbaric degree of efficiency which some nations have recently declared as the sole criterion of value or worthlessness, and even though his wife may not spend her mornings weighing flour and butter, Poland is a country where men and women can still satisfy one another's needs. It is not surprising that the *vie amoureuse* of this imaginative nation is highly developed. Love is continually leading to some drama or other, and suicide pacts or suicides for reasons of unrequited love are the order of the day. In Chopin's music we find a nationally coloured echo, exhaling a faint perfume of Paris, of Polish love, and *chagrin d'amour*.

Polish acting is helped by imagination and a romantic

desire for self-expression. Few nations can boast so high a standard of stage-craft as the Poles. National dramas, modern comedies, and farces are all equally well produced. I have seen productions in large Polish cities whose excellent theatres, like those of Germany, have a standing company of first-rate actors, which were as good as anywhere in Europe.

Polish humour is full of whimsicality. At times it is rather coarse, but of late it has profited by Jewish influence. In place of a heavy solemnity which treated the great field of national life as taboo, a gay sense of humour has appeared, so often a sign of enlightenment and progress.

A Polish humorist is responsible for the great, though unfortunately little-known, invention of the universal monument. Its inception came about in the following manner. In a South American republic the government of the moment was yet again overthrown, and the new régime wished to remove the monument of a general they hated from its site in the main street of the capital, and replace it by that of a military commander who was more up to date. In order to economize, they simply ordered the head of the statue to be sawn off and replaced by that of their new leader.

Some ten years ago a witty inhabitant of Warsaw took up this practical and sensible idea, and wrote in all seriousness to the Ministry of the Interior ; he set forth a plan to erect on one of the principal squares of the Polish capital a universal monument, which was to consist only of a body. The head was to be changed according to which party happened to be in power. The inventor expressed the opinion that the head of the Prime Minister of the moment should be screwed on to the universal monument, but he suggested that it would be a pretty compliment to foreign visitors of distinction if a facsimile of their head were to be temporarily attached to it, to the accompaniment of speeches, parades, the waving of flags, and cheers. The inventor wanted no monetary compensation, only the privilege of having his own head screwed on to the monument for the first six months after its erection, so that he might be the first of the series of ephemeral heroes to be thus honoured. Unfortunately the Polish Home Office, whose numerous departments are peopled by officials and officers, and not by philosophers and poets, showed no appreciation of this noteworthy inven-

tion, and turned it down. Perhaps another government may be found which may be prepared to acquire this practical idea from its originator, whose name I have unfortunately forgotten.

Not only the Polish peasants and townsmen, but also the representatives of the underworld, are animated by the multi-coloured imaginative genius of the race. Mountebanks and crooks, pickpockets and bamboozlers, invent the most ingenious methods of drawing long noses at the law. There are no race distinctions among Polish criminals, and Poles, Jews, Germans, and Ukrainians work in perfect harmony.

The chief vice of Poland is theft, and its chief causes are the great poverty of the country and the almost chronic economic distress. Everything left unguarded is stolen. The thieves screw off the handles of doors, steal the mat in the hall, remove the cap from the water-tank of a waiting car and pump the petrol out of the tank in the garage. A few years ago it was impossible to insure against theft in certain districts of Warsaw.

The reason for this was not the high quota of burglaries, for this could have been taken into calculation by the insurance companies, but because their great frequency led to a peculiar form of insurance-swindle. A man would take a flat, insure the contents for as high a figure as possible, and then go for long walks, leaving the flat unguarded. Experience showed that the burglars paid their welcome visit in a fortnight at the latest, sometimes within a few hours. The history of insurance swindling in Poland would justify a separate chapter. It is no accident that the oldest Jewish insurance story comes from Lodz, a Polish industrial town in which fires are frequent occurrences. A man said he wanted to take out an insurance policy against fire and hail, the other replied that he could understand about the fire, but how on earth could one make it hail?

There is no human weakness, no special opportunity or occasion which is not exploited in a most original manner by some clever crook. He waits in front of the stations and humbugs kind-hearted travellers with the tale that he needs a few zlotys to travel to the death-bed of his mother. He hangs round the gardens in front of the big hotels and accosts foreigners, offering a wonderful bargain—a diamond

smuggled over from Russia, which of course formed part of the Tsar's crown jewels. The guild of this particular type of swindler is so widely spread that they even have a name of their own, '*Brylanciarz*.' The procedure is as simple as it is efficient. The chosen victim meets a gentleman 'whose clothing betrays poverty, but cannot conceal his native distinction,' as the novelettes have it. The distinguished gentleman introduces himself as a Russian *émigré*, and mysteriously unwraps a sparkling diamond from his handkerchief. If the stranger takes the bait another crook appears on the scene, admires the stone, and declares he would buy it at once if he had the money on him. The stranger hesitates, and suggests that he might be prepared to buy it for a lower figure, but the 'Russian' refuses to part with the stone, and says that it would be only fair to both parties if it were valued by an authorized valuer. Unfortunately, he says, he is not acquainted with any jeweller in the town. The other crook takes his cue and offers to accompany both gentlemen to an expert who has a shop quite nearby. Chance wills it that the supposed jeweller should happen to be standing in front of his supposed shop. He examines the crown jewel through a magnifying-glass which he screws into his eye, and appraises it at double the price mentioned. The 'Russian' looks amazed, but insists that he must keep to his word as a man of honour—and the stranger hastens to conclude the bargain. Many thousands of polished bits of glass have been foisted on 'suckers' for dollar or hundred-zloty notes. I knew a German conductor who lost all the savings of his Russian tour in this way.

The crooks of Warsaw also know how to make capital out of current political and military events. During air-raid protection manœuvres, when there was a lot of talk about poisonous Hyperit-bombs, a clever business-man made a tidy sum with a lithograph of a special A.R.P. saint whom he had invented. The saint, surrounded by the inevitable halo, and clad in a noble flowing mantle, would be smiling benevolently, and raising his right hand in blessing. Underneath you would read the simple touching legend: 'Saint Hyperit pray for us.'

Another harmless case was that of the Polish agrarian

who, impelled by a creative urge, availed himself of one of the Cabinet crises so frequent during Poland's democratic period to ensconce himself in the Ministry of Agriculture as director of forestry. He worked from morning to night, gave orders over the telephone, signed innumerable papers, and did all he could to bring new life into Polish forestry. He is said to have been very much grieved when after a few days he was discovered to be a fraud and dismissed.

Less harmless was the gang of so-called consuls, which was as widely spread and as well organized as the *brylanciarzy*. The equipment of a consul was simple ; it consisted of a rubber stamp and a pair of horn-rimmed glasses. A consul lives on the various international impediments to satisfactory travel. Countless thousands of Eastern Europeans, especially peasants and Jews, dream of emigrating to the United States in order to build up a new home. But the good old days of before the War are over, and with them the liberty of settling where one wishes, and instead America has immigration laws, the quota, and the intelligence test. So it was not surprising that the American consulate was surrounded from morning to night by crowds of people who hoped to obtain *visas*. Often whole families of peasants would camp for days in front of the consulate, the paterfamilias in lambskin and high boots, the price of the homestead he had sold concealed in a leather bag under his shirt. It was only natural that he should listen gratefully when the polite young man whose acquaintance he had just made, promised to procure him the immigration permit from his personal friend, the American consul, for a slight consideration. Soon afterwards the two might be seen climbing the back stairs to the consul's apartment, which, according to the helpful young man, is situated just above the offices. Just as they cross the landing, on which is the door with the name-plate of the consulate, they meet a gentleman in a dark suit without a hat and wearing great horn-rimmed spectacles—the consul in person ! The young man makes a deep bow and expresses in Polish his pleasure at the unexpected meeting. The ensuing murmured conversation between the two friends appears to be carried on in English—the peasant catches the words 'all right,' the only English word he knows. Naturally he has no inkling

that the 'consul's' command of the English language is also restricted to this one word. The remainder of the business is carried out with speed and tact : the poor dupe hands over his passport in high glee, the 'consul' draws a rubber-stamp complete with pad from his attaché-case and gives the longed-for *visa* after several dollar notes have passed from hand to hand. Not until he reaches the agency of the shipping company does the unfortunate peasant discover that he has been duped by a pair of crooks.

The finest example of the inventive genius of Warsaw's underworld was the case of the Bishop of Plock. The ancient archiepiscopal palace stands at the fringe of the widespread Jewish quarter in the *Miodowa*, which means 'Honey-street.' Opposite the palace, among the different Jewish shops—fur-shops, clothes-shops, and second-hand dealers, which had gradually spread outside the ghetto during the last decades—there was an old-established house for church-furniture, where one could find vestments, chalices, monstrances studded with precious stones and pictures of saints.

One day—about fifteen years ago—two middle-aged men who looked respectable and were dressed like prosperous members of the middle class, entered the shop and introduced themselves as clerks of the Bishop of Plock. They said that His Grace had commissioned them to choose a set of vestments in white and gold for him. The honest shopkeeper was delighted at this opportunity of doing some business with the bishopric of Plock, which was said to be extremely wealthy. He spread out his finest pontifical vestments, and the emissaries of His Grace admired them exceedingly. A set was carefully put on one side, which, they said, would probably fit the Bishop. They were just arranging to have the vestments sent on approval to Plock, when one of the clerks, apparently struck by a sudden idea, exclaimed to his colleague : "Stasiu, how funny, this gentleman is exactly the same height as His Grace. He could slip into the vestments, and if they fit him, they will fit our Bishop—and we can take them home with us and pay cash for them." The shopkeeper was quite ready to fall in with this proposition ; he put on the tunic, then the heavy dalmatica, and finally the gold-embroidered chasuble.

Everything fitted to perfection. Just as he was about to put on the mitre something terrible happened with lightning rapidity. The two supposed clerks smashed the panes of the show-cases, grabbed some gold chains and jewelled crosses, pushed them into their coat-pockets, and leapt into the street—at their heels the shopkeeper in his vestments. It must have been a strange sight for the inhabitants of Warsaw's Jewish quarter: a wildly gesticulating Roman Catholic bishop in his pontifical robes running as fast as he could after two citizens in full flight! The Bishop shouted "Stop the thieves! Stop the thieves!" while the two rogues called in unison: "Help, help! A lunatic at large!" Once again roguery and wit triumphed over honest simplicity. A policeman and some courageous passers-by threw themselves on to the disguised merchant, under the impression that he was an escaped lunatic or even a dangerous madman running amuck, in order to bind him and take him to the police-station. A wild tussle ensued and no one took any notice of the poor man's desperate shouts about thieves and robbers, until at last he was overpowered. When, after some minutes, the truth came to light, it was too late. The swindlers had made off with their booty with the greatest of ease.

This concludes my purposely sketchy representation of some characteristic sides of Polish life. I am under no delusions as to the method I have chosen, which cannot be expected to plumb the depths of the soul of a nation or reveal the intricacies of its inner consciousness. It is as unorthodox as it is unscientific, but I would not have it otherwise. I have also avoided co-ordinating Polish characteristics with the intellectual and historical development of other Slav peoples. I purposely avoided this, because I believe that the Poles have always occupied an entirely separate position among the Slavs. It is noteworthy that Pan-Slavism, in its unadulterated form, never found a lasting home in the Sarmatian Plain. I am ready to defend this statement, although I am fully aware of the Pan-Slavistic tendencies of the Polish 'Messianists' of the last century and of the National Democrats such as Dmowski and Poplawski in our own day. As I have mentioned before, the opposition to Russia, the wall between Polish Catholicism

and Russian Orthodoxy have hindered Pan-Slavism from taking root in Poland.

I should like to add a word or two for my Polish friends. I know they are extremely sensitive, and quick to take offence in national matters. Some of them may be surprised that I have brought the ideas of great and inspired poets, the primitive reactions of superstitious peasants, and the rogueries of cut-purses equally to bear on the question—in my attempt to explain what is sacred to them. I would have them know that nothing is further from my thoughts than to offend their national susceptibilities. But I am convinced that the soul of a nation is as clearly mirrored in the undying words of a poet as in the knavish tricks of a buffoon. Not only Mickiewicz, but also the episcopal clerks of Plock are characteristic of Polish mentality, just as not only Goethe, but Till Eulenspiegel, go to make a picture of Germany. After all what would Don Quixote be without Sancho Panza?

If these pages should help to assist an understanding of the characteristic mentality of a people among whom I spent many years, rich in joy and sorrow, I shall not have written them in vain.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

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### FROM DEMOCRACY TO THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE HEART

**W**ARSAW AT THE END of 1922, when I began my work in Polish parliamentarianism, was at the apex of its power. At that time, Poland, like the other nations who had built up new States on the ruins of Imperial Russia and the realm of the Habsburgs, was attempting to form a democratic republic modelled on France. The Poles tried, rather unsuccessfully, to form an ideological link with that ancient Poland which had disappeared from the map in 1795. They talked of ancient Polish liberty and forgot that in those days political freedom existed only for the nobility, while the people vegetated in ignorance and servitude. In order to evoke an illusion of political continuity, the 3 May, anniversary of the Polish Constitution of 1791 (a constitution which the moribund Republic received as Extreme Unction), was declared a national holiday. Yet great as the difference between the new and the ancient Poland in its political and social structure might be, in one respect there was a fateful similarity. The anarchy displayed by the nobility in the Polish Parliament of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, with the famous right of veto which permitted a single member to invalidate decisions of the House, found its sequel in the lawlessness of the numerous political parties of Parliamentary Poland. The breaking up of political life was carried out to the utmost ; founded on the inborn individualism of the Polish people, it was still further encouraged by an electoral law which favoured the formation of small parties. The 100-per-

cent democrats of all Eastern Europe rejected the British polling-system as 'undemocratic and unjust.' They had to pay dearly for their lack of insight.

Many of the events which have changed Europe during the last years are easier to understand if one throws a glance at the parliamentary witches' cauldron of one of the post-War democracies. At the time when the Diet ruled Poland, there were about forty parties, of which half consisted of Poles, while the remainder was formed by the minorities—Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, White Russians, and Russians. This medley of parties resembled a disturbed ant-heap in its excited activity. Surging up and down, assembling and dispersing, dividing into sub-committees, it would form a united front which fell to pieces as soon as it was erected. It was really a miracle that a government was formed at all in these circumstances. This explains why crises in the Cabinet and Parliamentary battles often dragged on for weeks.

During a crisis in the Cabinet the parliamentarians had the time of their lives. The lobbies of the Diet were the scene of feverish activity. Coalitions and combinations were formed, candidates put forward and withdrawn again, messengers were dispatched from one party-centre to another, intrigues were spun and double-crossed by counter-plots. In a word, everything was done which served to compromise democracy and parliamentarianism in the eyes of the people, and to smooth the way for dictatorship. Marshal Pilsudski himself gave an amusing and accurate description of the political confusion he found in Poland on his return from Magdeburg. In a speech made to his Legionaries in the summer of 1927 he spoke of the chaos of political groups—too muddled even to be made into a crossword-puzzle. He said: "The crazy jumble was so fantastic that I must credit myself with phenomenal talent for having extricated the State and leading it on to some kind of a path. Even now we complain that we have too many parties; but remember what it was like in 1918, when it sufficed for four or five people to meet in a pot-house for them to constitute themselves as a party and simultaneously to brand everybody outside as criminals. If I had not such a hard skull, I would have gone mad at that time!"

During this super-abundance of parties, those in the centre had the best time. If a politician had succeeded, by the sweat of his brow, in forming a majority either of the Right or the Left, one of these centre-groups could always go over and bring about the fall of the Cabinet. There was one small party in Poland who had made a profession of these tactics, and whose leader had always to be furnished with a lucrative post by the government-chief of the hour, so as to avert a sudden 'change of opinion.'

This leads us to the question of Parliamentary corruption, which was one of the reasons why ever increasing numbers of the population recognized the national necessity of breaking with formal democracy. It goes without saying that the governments whose existence was due to this system very rarely deserved such a name. They were actually no more than Parliamentary commissions with executive power, and they were incapable of following any set policy, or of restricting the corruption which had penetrated into the groundwork of the State. A close, unwholesome atmosphere pervaded Poland. The radical groups and grouplets, like political infusoria, split off into terrorists and anarchist sub-groups. Simultaneously, the police carried on the Russian method of provocation, so that the Polish newspapers were often exclusively filled with reports of Communist and anarchist attacks on the State, or of war waged by the police against the so-called subversive elements.

Law and order threatened to disappear. If an individualist was not pleased with the way things were going, he would throw a hand-grenade or at least release the safety-catch of his revolver. If he felt he must protest against the existing social order, he left a bomb somewhere. Even students who had difficulty in passing their matriculation adopted the method of answering a difficult question in mathematics by a well-aimed shot at the teacher.

An attractive novelty in political life was the throwing of bombs to ensure law and order. One of these innovators was the editor of the Radical paper, *The Fight of the People*, Trojanowski, who was seriously hurt on 1 May 1925, as he was fiddling with a bomb in his office, which was situated in one of the small houses of the old part of Warsaw. At

first the police tried to represent the incident as quite harmless; Trojanowski had been an eccentric, who, like many people of his mentality, had a certain predilection for experimenting with explosives—and now, poor man, he had become the victim of his passion. But after lengthy investigations the fact transpired that this harmless trifle had already attempted the life of the German President of the Warsaw police in 1917. This time, however, he had been manufacturing bombs with the knowledge and consent of the political police, in order to pass them on to the Communists. This was a case of provocation, as the said Communists would have used them on the May Day celebrations, which were forbidden by the political authorities. The police had furnished him with the explosives for this express purpose. Under such circumstances, the demarcation-line between Bolshevik activities, provocation, and police measures was nearly swamped by the general anarchistic chaos.

Terrorism and the underground activities of informers and *agents provocateurs*, as well as the time-honoured Russian conspiratorial spirit, threatened to disintegrate the whole of political life. Strange patriotic alliances were formed, like the 'P.P.P.,' which combined fascist and anarchist elements and, modelled on popular thrillers, held meetings in cellars and tombs, where they discussed fantastic plans for overthrowing the Government.

Even in the Army, the apple of Poland's eye, anarchy and conspiracies were rife. It was certainly not an easy task to unite this army, which in fact consisted of five entirely different armies, or more correctly military units, into a harmonious whole. It consisted of the following elements: the legionaries of Pilsudski, the Polish contingent of the former Austrian Army, the corps formed during the revolution in Russia, the army of Haller which was formed in France and Italy, and lastly, of the Polish local forces which had been called up during the German revolution of 1918 in the province of Posen. It was difficult enough to amalgamate these five different groups, and the difficulty was increased by the fact that political parties and ambitious generals were continually forming separate groups of their own, thus further loosening the ties which still united the

Army. All this aroused the opposition of a great patriot, the creator of the nucleus of the Polish Army: Poland's first Marshal, Joseph Pilsudski, who had spent the last years of the Parliamentary regime in self-imposed solitude in his small country house. About six months before the *coup d'état* took place, coming events were foreshadowed by a demonstration. A thousand officers assembled one evening in front of the Marshal's house and swore an oath of eternal fealty to him.

In the meantime the chaos increased in Parliament. A National Government was formed, but it was to last only a few weeks. The Parliamentary régime was approaching its irrevocable end. The struggle between Pilsudski and the parties of the Right for the hegemony of the Army became more and more bitter. Pilsudski chose that moment to call on the President, Wojciechowski, in person; he handed him a memorandum, couched in obscure terms, setting forth the future formation of the Army—a document which, through its very vagueness, made a great appeal to the imagination of the people. Pilsudski read the declaration aloud, and then forced the unfortunate President to do likewise, as a proof that he had understood it. Then the Marshal left the castle, growling under his breath a remark meant for the President (who was as thin as a lathe): "I'll take care to blow out that taper!"

A short time later he was to fulfil his threat. A few weeks after his visit to the castle, Parliament was imprudent enough to present the country with a Cabinet formed by none other than the peasant leader Witos; a declared enemy of Pilsudski became Minister of War, and so the political tension was strained to the utmost. It was a direct provocation; the Marshal had to act! Young men in cars drove through the capital, scattering pamphlets protesting against the betrayal of the Polish Army. Crazy rumours filled the country. When it was spread around that Pilsudski was to be arrested, four regiments that had been assembled on the left bank of the Vistula near Rember-tow marched to Sulejuwek in order to protect their beloved leader. Urged by his generals, Pilsudski occupied the Warsaw suburb of Praga with these troops, reinforced by contingents of legionaries, on the same day—12 May 1926.

This was the signal for the *coup d'état*. The Government troops occupied the bridges over the Vistula, and Polish armies stood opposite to each other, ready to fight, on either bank of the river. A last dramatic meeting between the Marshal and the President had no result. Then civil war ensued. Pilsudski's troops stormed the bridge under cover of machine-gun fire and occupied the Old City of Warsaw. The majority of the garrison, among them a regiment of Guards, went over to the Marshal. But the Government, hoping for reinforcements which were hastily being summoned from the quarters of Poland hostile to Pilsudski, declared that in no circumstances would they give way to force. During the next two days both armies fought in the streets of Warsaw for the possession of the Capital ; both sides employed field-guns, machine-guns, and hand-grenades, erected barricades and dug trenches. Volunteers from the working-classes flocked to Pilsudski's flag, under the delusion that he would form a socialistic republic. When the Government threw detachments of infantry from Posen into the battle, it seemed for several hours as though the Parliamentary party was going to win the day. The leaders of the National Democrats declared that they would shed their last drop of blood and not retreat an inch before the mutiny was quelled. At that critical moment Pilsudski called up troops from every part of the country, fetching them with cars and lorries. Law and discipline were beginning to break up in Warsaw.

Anarchists and Bolsheviks established themselves on the roofs and fired at harmless passers-by, merely in order to provoke a general pandemonium. Just as I was turning a corner to go to the Legation, one of these terrorists threw a hand-grenade from the roof of a five-story building ; it fell into the crowd without, however, causing much damage, but exploded with a terrific detonation. People rushed about wildly and fled into the surrounding houses in search of cover. A few plucky men darted into the house from which the bomb had been thrown, to get hold of the criminal. Meanwhile, I was standing under the arched doorway of a house, together with some workmen who were calmly discussing the chances of the war. They were all enthusiastic supporters of the Marshal, whom they referred to as

*dziadek* (little grandfather) in the Russian fashion. At the end of the road a machine-gun was rattling. I peered cautiously round my doorway to watch the battle raging in the main thoroughfare near by. A skirmishing party was advancing and I could hear them cheering. I could not tell whether they were the Posen troops of the Government, or Pilsudski's men from Rembertow or Pinsk. A few stray bullets struck the wall of the house—and I retired hastily, as there was no sense in increasing the victims of this dissension in internal politics by the sacrifice of my person. So I leaned once more against my protecting wall, in the very shadow of the enemy.

When I peered out again from my cover, I noticed a man standing on the balcony of a house on the other side of the street; he was apparently watching the events down below with great interest. He was neatly dressed, wore dark striped trousers, a collar that was rather too high for him and he wore eye-glasses. His short hair was brushed straight up *en brosse*. He was easy to identify as a dentist's assistant or a chemist of national-democrat convictions. Suddenly I saw him disappear into his flat and, after a few seconds, return to the balcony door armed with a sporting rifle. Although he tried to conceal himself behind the curtains, I could see everything that he did. His face wore an expression of calm resolution. He shouldered his rifle, took aim carefully—and a few yards from me a Pilsudski volunteer, recognizable by his red and white armlet, fell with a cry, mortally wounded. The man in the eye-glasses looked up, nodded twice with a look of extreme satisfaction, and disappeared. A few minutes later he was back on the balcony again, an interested spectator of the fighting below. I went away quickly. The next day I heard that this private terrorist had been stopped in his little game of trying to interfere with the civil war.

Threading my way through narrow side-streets and making détours through places where I could expect to find only occasional snipers, I managed without serious risks to arrive just behind the front lines of the Posen regiment, then drawn up through the west of the city. During a pause in the firing I took cover behind a fence and watched the enemy position through my Zeiss glasses. A few yards

away, also under cover, a Polish captain was standing. We had an amicable conversation about the events of the day, but when the captain suggested that I should lend him my glasses for the duration of the civil war, I thought it better in view of the unequal distribution of forces to end the conversation.

So I moved on, and as the rattling had started again, I retired into a doorway to wait for the next lull in the battle. To my surprise I found there a German journalist whom I knew very well, and who, like myself, had made an excursion to the 'front.' We had been chatting for a few minutes when a soldier came into our doorway to attend to a defect in his rifle. While he was working at it, my journalist friend engaged him in conversation, as he wanted an interview with a genuine front-line soldier to judge the spirit of the troops. I shall never forget that dialogue. My friend said something to the soldier in his barbaric and hardly comprehensible Polish, and the soldier answered amiably with an equally atrocious pronunciation. This exchange of courtesies continued for a while, neither of the speakers understanding a word of what the other was saying, until they suddenly discovered that they were both Germans. "Are you really a German?" exclaimed the soldier. "You see, I come from the neighbourhood of B——" and he mentioned a little town in Western Poland, inhabited by Germans and Poles. The journalist enthusiastically revealed himself as a fellow-German, and continued in the familiar accents of his native tongue, asking the soldier what he thought of the civil war. The German soldier with the square Polish cap replied: "I can tell you that quite truthfully, because you, being a German, won't give me away. I think this civil war is simply splendid. Never again in my lifetime will I have a chance as a Polish citizen to shoot at the Poles officially!" Having uttered these sentiments, he shouldered his rifle, which he had repaired, and hurried back to the front lines, so as not to miss a minute of the civil war. I breathed a little prayer for all statesmen and politicians who had the present state of the world on their consciences.

A nice little civil war gives pleasure to many people. It provides a colourful diversion from the grey monotony

of every-day life. It must be much more thrilling to send a man to his doom by a well-aimed shot than to sit in an office, or like the dentist's assistant with the eye-glasses, to spend one's time making false teeth.

A friend of mine at the Roumanian Legation in Warsaw told me that a Roumanian from Bessarabia called on him a few days after the street-fighting; the man had a white bandage round his head and came to ask for money to get home. My friend asked him: "Are you wounded, you poor devil? I suppose you were hurt by a sniper from a roof?"

"No, sir, I was fighting with Pilsudski's men."

"Are you crazy? Why did you, a Roumanian, take part in the Polish Civil War, which was none of your business? What were you thinking of?"

"Well, I thought to myself, here's a good thing. We got three zlotys a day, and good soup with sausage as well."

On the third day of the street-fighting, Pilsudski's men stormed the Belvedere, the residence of the President. President Wojciechowski climbed over a wall and fled to Wilanow, the famous castle of King John Sobieski, and from there he resigned. The 'taper' was extinguished and Pilsudski was master of Poland. His officers drove through the streets of Warsaw, waving flags and rejoicing. A few days later the Marshal took up his residence at the Belvedere as a symbol of his power.

Pilsudski's *coup d'état* was a new proof for those who were still ignorant of the fact, that governments are always overthrown by energetic minorities. Naturally, such a turn of events must depend on certain psychological and political conditions; the majority of the population being nearly always passive and inclined to accept the events of the moment. Pilsudski had only about a thousand men when he crossed the Vistula on 12 May. Lenin and Trotsky with a mere handful of devoted adherents accomplished the greatest and probably the most fateful revolution of History. The history of South America during the last century, and of post-War Europe is an ever-renewed proof of the dynamic power of courageous and purposeful minorities. Unless all signs and portents are fallacious, the near future will furnish us with further proofs.

Pilsudski showed real genius by establishing in Poland a government which combined dictatorship with democratic liberties in a most remarkable fashion. He despised and hated the parliamentarians, and he was profoundly convinced of the necessity of curtailing their power, but he knew his people too well not to realize that the closing of all safety-valves must lead to new tensions, perhaps to new revolutions. Therefore he categorically refused the extreme dictatorship for which his adherents were clamouring, and with equal firmness rejected the re-establishment of formal democracy demanded by the peasant and the Social Democrats. This preference for peculiar half-measures was another characteristic the Marshal had in common with Wallenstein, the *Generalissimo* of the Thirty Years War ; both these great soldiers liking to spread a mysterious twilight over all their actions. A few hours after the *coup d'état*, Pilsudski sent for some of the deputies, mentioned a cracking whip which would swish round their heads, and threatened that he would not protect them from the anger of the people if they neglected their national duties.

For years Poland's home policy was decided by these words, and by the military and administrative powers vested in the person of the Marshal. After a short hesitation Parliament legalized the *coup d'état* and elected Pilsudski's candidate as President. Then it was allowed, *pro forma*, to carry on as in the good old times. Cabinets were introduced, exposés read out, committees called, questions asked, and the Budget passed ; the Opposition even made fiery speeches, but in their own interests, the representatives of the people knew better than to oppose the Government in earnest. "We aren't a Parliament, we just play at being one," the clever peasant Witos remarked at the time with wit and accuracy.

This confused political sideshow could not be made to function smoothly without initial difficulties. Some deputies could not be made to understand that Parliament had lost its real power. The deputies even attempted to make use of their veto on the Budget so as to cut down the expenditure of the State. The history of that melodramatic crisis, which took place in the autumn of 1926, is characteristic for the peculiarities of the Polish Dictatorship. The question had

arisen of 34 million zlotys supplementary credit which Parliament refused to grant to Bartel's Government. At that time, Pilsudski had contented himself with the post of Minister of War and General-Inspector of the Army, and he was taking a cure at Druskienniki. This time the deputies were firm and decided to fight to the last ditch. No credits—the welfare of the State is more important than the deputies' salaries, was their battle-cry. But after a few days a few members of the Opposition began to murmur orders to retreat ; soon bargaining and haggling was going on behind the scenes, while the heroes on the stage continued to strike heroic attitudes. Then orders came from Druskienniki ; no compromise ! The humming of these parliamentary flies immediately ceased, and the deputies retired in order to hold yet another conference and decide on their policy. At this time a colonel appeared in the lobby of the Diet ; this was no ordinary colonel, he was no less a personage than Pilsudski's chief of Cabinet, the versatile Joseph Beck, later to become Poland's Minister for Foreign Affairs. The colonel appeared to be in a very good humour, in spite of the fact that the Government had rejected any compromise, which in normal times would have led to its overthrow. Several deputies and journalists collected, driven by curiosity, round the man who enjoyed the Marshal's confidence, and he favoured them with the following address : " What are you still doing here ? I have the majority. At a nod fifteen hundred soldiers will be at my disposal, while you cannot muster more than four hundred. Personally, I find the proceedings here extremely boring, and I am now going to dance at a night club." With that, he left.

His words had increased the doubts of the people's representatives, and as a result of profound deliberation they decided to give way, in view of the decidedly crushing majority of 1500 against 400. Thus the Budget presented by the Government was passed with a very considerable majority. The salaries had won the day, but the opponents refused to admit their defeat. So a last poisoned arrow was released at the Government expressing lack of confidence (not of the President or the Minister for War), but of two perfectly innocuous Ministers. The parliamentarians hoped that this

would not have any unpleasant results, and patted themselves on the back for their clever trick. Then the unexpected happened, and the game became serious. Contrary to all expectations, the Prime Minister reacted constitutionally and the entire Government resigned. The deputies had not reckoned with that. The Marshal sent for the Prime Minister in order to give him some 'advice.' The news that he, as Minister of War, had resigned, only moved him to cheerful laughter, in which the Prime Minister joined. The actual words uttered at this interview remained unknown, but its results soon made themselves felt. As soon as the Prime Minister returned to Warsaw, he summoned the Cabinet, and a few hours later the Government in its former entirety was newly appointed by the President. This kind of 'puss in the corner' policy was cheerfully carried on until all the deputies had realized that their function was merely to let off steam for the Polish nation. Yet even this letting off of steam was reduced to a minimum by the strictly applied order of the House.

A witty Warsaw journalist had the amusing idea of interviewing one of the Parliament doorkeepers about the political situation. Some of the simple man's remarks are more informative than pages of many a learned essay. "What, you want to interview me?" the servant of the Diet began. "You wouldn't make fun of a poor fellow! An interview with a doorkeeper of the Diet, to-day? Two years ago I would have understood it, for the deputies decided and we also heard and saw a great deal. When I went to the grocer's opposite, people used to lie in wait for me and ask me all sorts of questions: Was the Diet going to introduce a tax? Who were they going to appoint as Minister? And those folks thought a lot of me, I can tell you! In those times it was something to be employed by the Diet. We even had to work during recess. Deputies came, even Ministers came, and reported to the Marshal of the Diet. There were always heaps of people in the cloakrooms. There was life, things were moving. The newspaper editors, too," he continued, "had their work cut out in those days. Ah, what great times they were!" His voice quavered with emotion. "Do you remember the transport commission at midday, and how the legal com-

mission interrupted the sitting because one of the Ministers had fallen? We looked down on the Ministers then, we knew they were here to-day and gone to-morrow. The Ministers were just waiting in the passage. And when there was a Government crisis, what a lot of cars there were waiting in front of the Diet, how many gentlemen came and called on the Marshal! And the folks at the grocer's would ask me: 'Who is going to be Minister now? What did Witos say?'

"But nowadays nobody asks me anything. And when I go over to the shop, they take no more notice of me than of a fly. There's nothing to do now; we look round the building to see that nothing's stolen, and in the evening we lock up the committee-room and sit down together to talk about the great times of the Diet, when Arthur the barber had all the latest news, because it was he who used to shave Witos, Glombinski, and Stronski. And to-day? To-day the same Arthur who used to know everything hangs around the gate and asks the President's chauffeur what news there is. That's what we've come down to." With that the door-keeper closed his sad tale and sank into a gloomy reverie. The journalist, respecting his sorrow, realized that he must ask no more questions.

In spite of all the measures against parliamentarism, it would be erroneous to suppose that Pilsudski's dictatorship, although it was occasionally hard and unbeautiful, was in a deeper sense hostile to the people or anti-democratic. He was always intent on giving his beloved Poles the form of government which was best adapted to the peculiar character of the people. It is not doing justice to the unique position Pilsudski occupied in his native country to call him a dictator. He certainly ruled his country, but he only dictated when he thought this was necessary for pedagogical reasons. This incomparable psychologist would let things slide as long as possible, and then take decisive action at the last moment. A wise and sensitive Polish poet once characterized the form of government which Poland enjoyed since May 1926 as a 'dictatorship of the heart.'

This comes very near the truth. In spite of his rough exterior and his occasional volcanic outbursts of temper, which drove him to forget the vocabulary of parliamen-

tarism and employ the far more convincing vernacular of the camp, the chief characteristic of Pilsudski's personality was the fact that he was so profoundly human. This wonderful blending of roughness, energy, fatalistic courage, unselfishness, his noble scorn of money, the spartan simplicity of his personal requirements and the crystal clarity of his character made him what he was—a born ruler of men. He was aware of his own qualities and he knew that the resuscitation of Poland was only due to his energy. He had, as a young man, edited a small Socialist paper, which he wrote, set, corrected, and distributed alone from a dirty cellar in a house of the soot-laden industrial town of Lodz ; by this publication he had been the first to reawaken the ideal of Poland's independence, while the representatives of Pan-Poland were striking their flag in terror of Russia's power. He had suffered for Poland in the prisons of Siberia, and he had eaten the bitter bread of emigration in Japan. It was he who formed the nucleus of the future Polish Army, when he formed his Polish legions in the autumn of 1914—for they were Polish, even though they fought under the shadow of the Central Powers.

The rest is history. Herr von Beseler, the German Governor-General of Poland, banished Pilsudski to the German fortress of Magdeburg, because he had become a menace to the Central Powers. His imprisonment at Magdeburg plays a large part in the Pilsudski legend, and many instances of the hardships the 'commandant' had to suffer there are repeated. But the Marshal himself, with his characteristic frankness, destroyed the legend of his sufferings as a prisoner in Germany. In one of his periodical lectures he said : " In prison I lived under extraordinary conditions, as my gaolers would not apply the ordinary prison rules to me. I was an exceptional prisoner, and as such I was kept in the fortress of Magdeburg in complete isolation, but I was allowed many privileges and liberties. In every respect I was treated as a general, I had a batman at my disposal, and I occupied three rooms and a garden. Only at 10 p.m. the lights had to be extinguished, as this was a binding rule for the entire prison. In that respect there was no difference made between a general, a lieutenant, or a Tommy. Except for that trifling restriction

I was more free in Magdeburg than in any of the other prisons I have been in."

Pilsudski returned to Warsaw a few days after the collapse of the Central Powers. On the same night he was the master of Poland, because power was his natural prerogative. He himself has said that he did not even need to stoop in order to grasp it. On the following day he installed the major of his legions, the Socialist Moraczewski, as chief of the first independent Polish Government.

Like many men of action, Pilsudski was no lover of superfluous words. More than anything else, he hated involved diplomatic *communiqués* and laws pressed into paragraphs. It was characteristic of the man that he made no public declaration after his *coup d'état*. So the expectancy was tense when a few months after the street-fighting in Warsaw, the new master of Poland announced that he would speak on the wireless. Everybody waited with great interest to hear the Marshal's broadcast, which was expected to be of great political importance and to reveal the future development of Poland. One can imagine the amazement of the public when Pilsudski, instead of reading a declaration of his policy or giving an exposé, recited a fairy-tale of which he was the author—a story for Polish children about a fairy and the King of the Frogs. An impressive picture was painted of this scene, representing the Marshal in his simple grey Legionary's uniform, his collar open, sitting at the desk of his study in front of the microphone. His daughters, Wanda and Jadiviga, are seen on either side of him, listening rapturously to their beloved parent's story.

It must have been about then when the Socialist leaders, his former brothers in arms from the days of the Russian Revolution, called on him in the Belvedere in order to ask him for the last time to realize the socialistic ideals which had united them in their youth. Pilsudski listened to them in silence, and then he pronounced the words which perhaps throw more light than any others on his development and his national political mentality: "Gentlemen, we boarded the Socialist train together, but I got out at the station of Polish independence. I wish you a happy continuation of your journey to Utopia!"

Pilsudski could develop great personal charm in private

intercourse. He was fond of telling anecdotes of former times, expressing himself in colourful language. He was quick in the uptake and fond of witty repartee. I remember a reception given for the inauguration of a monument to Chopin in 1927. Musicians from all countries had come to Warsaw to pay homage to this genius of Poland and France. Pilsudski spoke to the guests in German and French, and when the Austrian composer, Josef Marx, complimented him on his excellent German, the Marshal, referring to his imprisonment with a whimsical smile, replied : " Perhaps, but with somewhat of a Magdeburg accent ! "

Pilsudski was a realist both in his home and his foreign policy. He was quite aware that Poland's greatest need was peace after the horrible devastations of the Great War and her struggles against the Bolshevik armies. Therefore his main objective was to make Poland's foreign policy thoroughly national. In the first years after the War the country was ruled by France, who assigned to Poland the role of a French gendarme on the Vistula. Hundreds of French officers overran the country in order to reform the Army according to the French pattern. Many of these officers lacked the tact so necessary for this delicate task, while others were incapable of assimilation to the peculiar conditions. All this led to disagreements and resentments, which exercised a bad influence on the mutual relations of the two countries. Pilsudski was determined to make an end to this French hegemony in foreign affairs, even though he remained convinced that the Franco-Polish alliance must be maintained. But he resisted with all his might and with great success all attempts to force Poland into a role of a vassal state. He dismissed the French military mission, after causing their staff to be extremely reduced, in a rather abrupt manner, and thus made Poland completely independent of France.

At that time his critics brought forward the old reproach, which has often been repeated since, that Pilsudski had loosened the alliance with France because of his secret preference for Germany. This affirmation is entirely unjustified. It is correct that Marshal Pilsudski, unlike many other Polish politicians, was never convinced of the inevitability of a future war between Germany and Poland. On the contrary,

he believed that the two nations could live peacefully side by side, as they could give each other so much by exchanging their cultural and commercial goods.

Whilst Pilsudski allowed himself to be solely determined by realistic motives in his policy towards Western and Central Powers, certain emotional reasons influenced his policy towards Russia. The memories and experiences of his youth played an important part here. Joseph Pilsudski was the scion of a Polish gentry family from Latvia, a country which has given many famous men to Poland. The lesser nobility of Lithuania have a strong and individually coloured nationalism of their own, combining love for the Polish nation with deep affection for the soil of Lithuanian home. Thus Pilsudski's compatriot, the poet Mickiewicz, opens his *epos*, 'Pan Tadeusz,' with the famous verse : ' O Lithuania, my fatherland, how fair art thou ! '

In this country of strange mixtures, where the peasants are White Russians or Lithuanians, the townsmen Jews, and the nobles Poles, Russian nationalism used to celebrate true orgies during the last century. Amongst the pupils of the *Krongymnasium*, the public school in Vilna where Pilsudski pursued his studies for nine years, nine-tenths spoke nothing but Polish at home—but woe betide the child who let fall a Polish word at school ! The first time it was punished by being locked up, the second time by imprisonment for several holidays, and at the third offence it was expelled. Even religious instruction, which was given by Catholic priests who spoke the most terrible Russian, had to be imparted in the State language. The fact of possessing a Polish book was treated as a political crime, even as incipient revolt.

Pilsudski's family had to suffer great persecutions from the Tsarist Government, as his father had been the Civil Commissar of the Polish National Government for the principality of Samogitia during the abortive Polish rising of 1863. It was only natural that young Pilsudski should take part in those Polish conspiracies which hoped to overthrow the Russian Empire by revolution. He was not more than twenty years of age when the Russian Government condemned him, for his participation in the attempted assassination of the Tsar, to five years' banishment to the wastes of

Siberia. Actually Pilsudski had had no part in this particular conspiracy—but that carried no weight with the Tsarist authorities ; the young man was a potential enemy of the State, and as such he had to be punished.

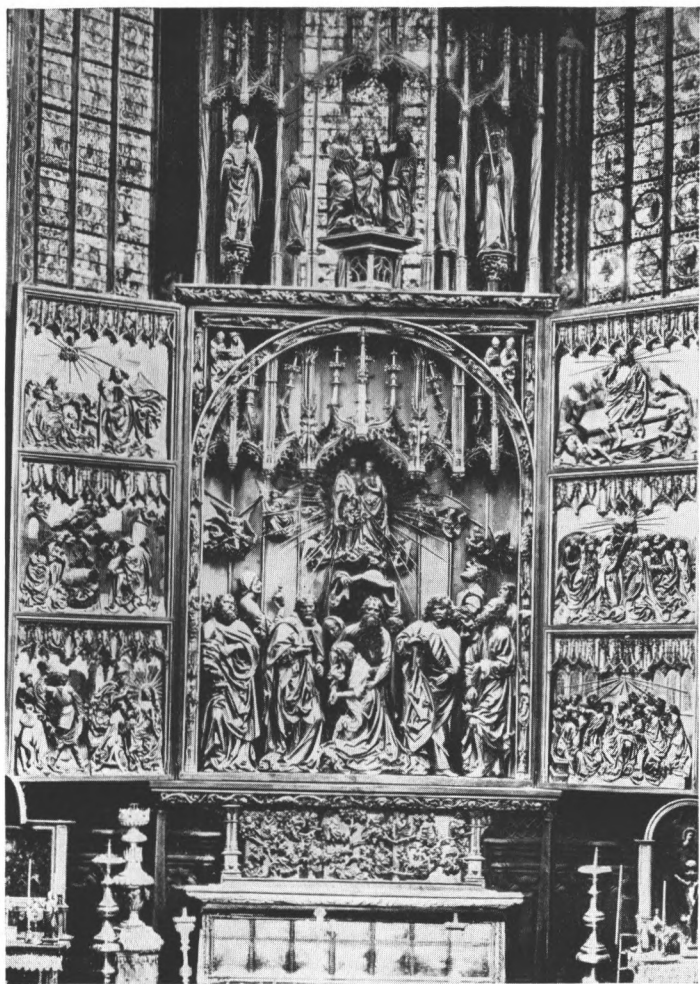
It is asking too much of human nature to expect a man to forget such bitter and terrible experiences. Therefore Pilsudski's Eastern policy at first aimed at dividing the districts that lie between the real Poland and the real Russia from the Russian mainland ; these were Lithuania, White Russia, and the Ukraine, and he wished to form these countries into semi-sovereign States and set them up as a protective wall between Poland and Russia. This was the aim of Pilsudski's march on Kiew in 1919, but this plan, magnificent and fantastic as it was, was not destined to succeed. The peace treaty of Riga created an immediate Russo-Polish frontier, although large parts of the Ukrainian and White Russian colonies were given to Poland.

It is probable that similar trains of thought, linked with bitter memories of his youth, continued to act on Pilsudski's mind even later, and were the reason that cordial relations were never established between Poland and Russia. They also created the psychological basis for the understanding with Germany, which led to the well-known German-Polish agreement in 1934, an agreement which represents the last decisive step to Poland's independence in foreign policy. The germ of Poland's foreign policy, which has presented France with so many difficulties during the last years, was hatched out in the prisons of Tsarist Russia—France's ally before and during the Great War. Colonel Beck is only the executor of Pilsudski's testament.

During the last years of his rule, when he had put interior conditions in order and placed the country's foreign policy on a new national basis, the Marshal withdrew more and more from public affairs. The weight of his years, after all the hardships and sufferings of his youth, began to tell on him, and he appeared only rarely in public. Only the most intimate circle of his friends and confidants could still approach him. He became a living legend, an old man of the mountains. Not only his adherents but also the members of the Opposition looked on him as the ideal representative of Polish manhood.

I saw him for the last time in autumn 1933. It was in Cracow, the ancient Polish capital, where the Poles were celebrating the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of King John Sobieski's feat of arms against the Turks under the walls of Vienna. Once again I fell under the spell of that unique city where I had made my first uncertain childish steps, and the magic of its wonderful churches and ancient houses fascinated me. Slowly I wandered through the lovely winding streets, where countless childhood memories awakened. Arrived on the principal square, I gazed affectionately at the familiar contours of St. Mary's, with its two unequal towers. The clock struck the hour, and I waited to hear the four bugle-calls of the tower warden, that signal which breaks off so suddenly and tragically, and which used to be the delight of my childhood. My father had to tell me the story over and over again ; how the bugle was blown in memory of the days of long ago, when the heathens were threatening Cracow and the arrow of a Tartar pierced the throat of the tower warden, so that the note of his bugle broke off in the midst of the fanfare he was sounding. Happy the land and the city where the uniformity of a soulless civilization and the fanatic desire for innovation of traditionless usurpers have not yet succeeded in destroying everything that links a nation to its past ! A people that respects its history and cultivates its traditions respects itself.

I entered the church and gave myself up to the deep, warm colour of its interior. On the main altar stood the masterpiece of one of the greatest sculptors of two nations, the mysterious Veit Stoss of the Germans, the Wit Stwos of the Poles. In this great work German fervour and Slav nostalgia are welded, and here beats the heart of a city which is in itself a wonderful synthesis of the German and the Polish soul. Cracow was built by German burghers, whose descendants in the course of time became good and faithful Poles ; it was a city of kings and scholars, a Polish Rheims with its own Sorbonne. Perhaps it was owing to the German strain that the thoughts and ideals of Poland found their most adequate expression here, just as Polish poetry reigned supreme in Vilna, which was exposed to Russian and Lithuanian influences. Vilna and Cracow are to Poland what Weimar and Heidelberg have been to Germany.



*Photo: Henryka Poddebskiego*

Triptyque in the Cathedral of St. Mary in Cracow,  
by Veit Stoss.



Marshal Pilsudski.

Next morning was the celebration. Every person of rank and position in Poland had assembled in the Church of the Royal Castle Wawel, whose history goes back into the mists of time. In the choir of the beautiful church the President, the ministers, generals, diplomats, and dignitaries had taken their places. Then the Marshal came up from the crypts, where, followed by his military friends, he had laid a wreath on the tomb of the conqueror of the Turks ; he was dressed as usual in his field-grey uniform ; he was stooping a little, but his eyes glowed from under his thick grey eyebrows. He sat down on the right side of the choir, next to the President. The Archbishop of Cracow, Prince Sapieha, who looked like a fifteenth-century prince of the Church, celebrated the High Mass and intoned the 'Te Deum.' The Marshal looked rigid and unmoved. But when, at the end of the service, the flower of the Polish nation, who were assembled in the church, joined in singing the ancient national song, 'Boże coś Polska,' his emotion overwhelmed him. He was witnessing the great moment when Poland, his Poland for which he had fought all his life, was like a strong and visible presence around him. His eyes became moist, and I saw a tear slowly rolling down his wrinkled cheek.

Now he, too, is resting in the vault on the Wawel, beside the great Polish kings, Vladislav Jagiello and John Sobieski, and the immortal Polish poets, Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Slowacki—he, Joseph Pilsudski, who in his lifetime became a king and whose life was a saga.

## CHAPTER NINE

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### PREMATURE ANSCHLUSS

MY ACTIVITIES AT THE Austrian Legation in Warsaw did not satisfy me. This Legation was only one in name, actually it was no more than a commercial clearing-house, which attempted to create business relations for the Austrian export industries. This state of affairs was not only a result of the complete passivity of Austria's foreign policy, but also of the special economic talent of the Austrian Minister. Nevertheless, we kept up a voluminous political correspondence; our reports consisted chiefly of bad translations from the *Journal de Pologne*, and ended with a stereotyped formula, which, like the oracles of the Pythia, declared every future development as probable. Something like this: 'The Polish Government will probably command a large majority in Parliament, nevertheless, it is not quite out of the question that it will remain in the minority.'

This peculiar method of reporting had the undeniable advantage that it always foretold what actually happened; of course this was balanced by the disadvantage that it did not shed much light. Despatches of this sort were manufactured in huge quantities, sent in piles to Vienna on courier day, and after a suitable stay in the study of the political official into whose province they came, they would disappear for ever, unread, into the archives. When I once asked innocently why this Sisyphean labour was performed at all, I was told that it was absolutely necessary for the files. I soon received the impression that even the weal of the State must stand back when the fetishism of the

files came into play. Wheels revolved uselessly ; we were busy just being busy.

During a summer furlough in 1923 my unfavourable impressions were still increased. I was visiting the Director of Foreign Affairs at the Chancellery in order to give him a short exposé on the foreign policy of Poland and the relations between Poland, Austria, and the neighbouring States, as I thought that an official in a leading position must attach a certain importance to hearing a general resumé.

He listened politely to what I had to say, and when I had finished, he remarked : " What you have told me was very interesting in itself, and it would have interested me under normal conditions. But you can't expect me to produce political feelings when I am being ground down by trifles. They are economizing at every turn, I can't even get the necessary writing materials ; I've been fighting for a silly red and blue pencil that I need for marking my despatches, for over a week. They can't expect me to buy the pencil myself out of my ridiculous pay. Perhaps you'll understand now why I can't muster any real enthusiasm for the problems of Poland's foreign policy, however important they may be from our point of view. We are all absorbed by the struggle for existence, so that we just can't do any proper work."

This spirit of indifference met me everywhere and depressed me profoundly. Already before the War, even right through the nineteenth century, a certain defeatism had been characteristic of the mental attitude of the Austrians. It has always seemed to me as though Austria's will to live had been consumed and used in the struggle against the Turks. Ever since the death of Prince Eugène, the great *generalissimo* of Charles VI, everything went wrong. The Empress Maria Theresa was unlucky in her wars, and her son, Emperor Joseph, in his reforms. Emperor Franz was a genuine defeatist, who accepted the weakness of Austria compared to the efficiency of striving foreign countries, as a natural phenomenon. When, a few years after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, he visited Zara in Dalmatia with an Austrian fleet, he was surprised to find such fine roads there. When he asked who had built them, he was told that they had been made by order of the French

Marshal Marmont while Dalmatia belonged to the French province of Illyria. When they landed at the next Dalmatian port he again admired the roads. Once more he was told that they had been constructed by French soldiers, where-upon Emperor Franz, in his broad Viennese dialect, made the extremely Austrian remark that it was a pity the French hadn't stayed a bit longer !

Emperor Franz was succeeded by the feeble-minded Emperor Ferdinand, who was not the kind of ruler to evoke the patriotic enthusiasm of his subjects. He was forced to abdicate during the revolution of 1848, and continued to live for many years in quiet retirement in the Hradshin Castle at Prague. He was very proud of the fact that he had left his empire undiminished to Emperor Francis Joseph, as though it were a matter of course for every Austrian monarch to lose some of his territories. Thus when Francis Joseph had to give up Lombardy and later Venetia after the disastrous wars of 1859 and 1866, the old Emperor rubbed his hands in childish glee and pronounced the historical words : " Franzl has lost another province. We didn't lose any provinces. We are grateful to our father, that he taught us to reign so well ! "

This apparently inevitable descent of Austria from her position as the first Great Power of the Continent, to that of ' the sick man ' among the European nations (whose speedy end, like that of Turkey, was always being prophesied), naturally reflected on the mentality of the Austrian, and especially of the Austrian bureaucrat. After the dissolution of the realm this defeatism increased to a hopeless pessimism which was actually a form of nihilism.

At the same time the Austrians appeared to have lost all sense of national dignity—which was not surprising under the circumstances. Cowering under the blows of want and poverty, they tried to take advantage of the nationalism of the victorious States by insinuating themselves in a spineless manner. Zealous diplomats who knew nothing of the temper of the people attempted to prove in the capitals of the Allies that Austria had become the victim of Prussia's lust for conquest. They subscribed to the theory which was then universally approved, that the spirit of Potsdam alone was responsible for the disaster of 1914. They hoped by these

manœuvres to separate Austria from Germany and smuggle her into the line of the associated States. Even if the supposition of Germany's sole responsibility for the War were correct, Austrian diplomats should have been the last to make use of it for political purposes. I do not propose to discuss the question, whether it was wise from the point of view of the old Austria, to ally herself with Imperial Germany for 'better or for worse.' It is probable that no other policy was possible, and the query as to what would have happened if the two Empires had not steered a parallel course is futile to-day. One thing is certain : every nation should face the consequences of the policy it has adopted, and therefore it is in honour bound to stand by its defeated comrade in arms until a larger understanding leads to the breaking up of the enemy fronts. This moment had not yet come when from 1919 to 1924 French troops were still standing on either side of the Rhine.

In those days I probably saw all this in a much sharper light, and felt it much more profoundly than I do now. It is a privilege of youth to be radical, and so I decided to take the consequences of my observations in a radical manner. This could only be accomplished for me by quitting the service of Austria. With this aim in view, I called on a man for whom I already had a high regard—the German Minister in Warsaw, Ulrich Rauscher. I explained to him at some length how a man of my mettle could not feel satisfied to serve in the Austrian Diplomatic Corps, considering its aims at the time, and I asked him to help me to go over to the German service, either as a diplomat or as a journalist. Ulrich Rauscher listened to me with great understanding and promised to help me. He fulfilled his promise faithfully, for a few weeks later I received a telegram from the German Foreign Office, inviting me to come to Berlin. I was to negotiate there about the institution of a Warsaw branch of the German semi-official news agency, the Wolff Bureau.

On a hot day in June 1924 I was standing rather nervously in the waiting-room of the all-powerful director of the agency, Heinrich Mantler. The room was furnished with the none too tasteful solidity of Wilhelminian Germany ; the walls hung with dark embossed leather over the wooden panelling,

the furniture of solid oak, elaborately carved, and club easy chairs of preposterous size. On the wall there was a picture of a man with carefully-groomed whiskers, who looked like a banker of the Second Empire—apparently the founder of the firm. Herr Wolff, for it could be no one else, looked wealthy and sure of himself, there could be no doubts about his bank balance. Those were the good old days in Germany, what with expansion and export and wealth—not forgetting the heroic old Emperor and Bismarck! ‘We Germans fear God and nothing else in the world!’ Really—nothing else? Not even your superiors? Another German slogan flashed through my mind: ‘Let us help Germany into the saddle, it will be able to ride by itself.’ Certainly, but where to? Towards the east—or, better perhaps, to conquer the hereditary enemy in the west? Over and over again these deafening phrases, old ones and new ones—they keep people from thinking! ‘To have a place in the sun’ and to march and march and to be shouted at and to march on, blindly ‘through to world power.’

Yet that is not the true Germany, that is merely its caricature. Where can we find it? Perhaps on the heights of Ilmenau, where the greatest German poet carved his most beautiful verses into the woodwork of a summer-house. ‘*Ueber allen Gipfeln ist Ruh*’—*Le doux pays de Werther*, where is it now? Buried and forgotten, like Goethe and Schiller, in the princely vault of Weimar. . . .

I went to the window and looked out: cars swung round the corners, hooting wildly, people hastened towards some well-defined goal, newspaper vendors ran shouting out of a house. Everywhere hurry, haste, *tempo*! This was Prussia, racially akin and yet so alien, so much more noisy than our placid Austria—and Berlin, the city of work and unceasing activity. Suddenly my reverie was interrupted by a kindly voice saying with an unmistakable Viennese dialect: “Please sit down, *Herr Graf*! What a pleasure for me to have a close compatriot in the business!” My shyness disappeared in a few moments. Within half an hour everything was settled and the contract made out which appointed me representative of the Agency for Warsaw. Could I start work on 15 August?—I agreed with pleasure. I paid a few more calls to the Foreign Office, and attended a few

luncheon parties with important men of the Press headquarters, and everywhere I was made most welcome in my quality as an Austrian. Thus I was able to return to Warsaw in high spirits, to liquidate my work at the Austrian Legation in Warsaw and my commitments to Vienna—all of which was effected in a most friendly spirit.

Thus I had become a journalist, which, according to Bismarck, is the profession of those who have failed in their profession. This coincided more or less with what the so-called 'good society' of Warsaw and Vienna felt about my decision; they could not understand how I could give up the respected profession of a diplomat for the far less gentlemanly career of a newspaperman. Their imagined journalist must be a little Jew with a greasy coat-collar covered with dandruff, who is admitted to receptions where he and his like blockade the buffet—an equivocal personage who is anything but pleasing in manners or appearance.

I would like to establish once and for all that journalism is not a centralized and clearly defined profession. It is a common denominator of all those people who observe and describe life in its entirety. The only thing they have in common is the medium of their activity, the written expression of their ideas. Journalism embraces many fields and mental planes; the reporter who describes a fire or the arrival of a popular boxer at the station, the special correspondent on cricket or billiard matches, the leader writer, and the scientifically trained economic correspondent, all work under the same flag. Men like Winston Churchill, Mussolini, or Benes are journalists, just like the young fellow who stands in front of Buckingham Palace in order to note the exact time when the Premier's car returns to Whitehall. The profession he has chosen is no more than the basic condition of a journalists' career; it depends on him alone, on his talent, his personality and his industry, whether he will make a position for himself in the widespread field of his activity.

Journalism is not an entirely free profession like that of a sculptor or an artist, as the newspaper world represents a hierarchy. Unlike the career of an officer or an official, the rise in this hierarchy is not due to the length of a man's service, but on his personal accomplishments. Luck and

chance play only a small part in the career of a journalist. One has heard of stupid statesmen and foolish generals whose names have gone down in history through some fateful hazard. There are many captains of finance who owe their fortune or their position to a lucky brain-wave or an order to buy or sell, given at the right moment—but there is not one journalist whose rise to fame has not been earned by sheer hard work.

Among newspapermen the foreign correspondent occupies an especial position. It is his duty to inform the people of his home-country of all the important events that take place in a foreign country. This is no sinecure, for the journalist of to-day is continually being driven on by competition. He is forced to be always *au qui vive*, he must be prepared at every hour of the day to formulate important political or other events within a few minutes and to transmit them by telephone or wire, explaining and criticizing them as he does so. So he must not only be well informed about the inner, foreign, and economic policy of the country he is reporting on, but he must also be able to judge which news items are valuable or interesting for home consumption. This work demands not only knowledge, experience, and a clear analytical intelligence, but even a certain artistic sensitivity—in a word : the true journalistic instinct which can be developed, but not acquired. The basic characteristic of a foreign reporter ought to be a strong sense of moral responsibility—for he should never forget that he is serving peace, mutual understanding among nations, and truth. He should never be a narrow-minded, party-ridden local patriot who cannot see any event except through the coloured glasses of some doctrine or other, but he should attempt to assimilate the entire mentality of the people among whom he works, so as to become capable of forming an unbiased opinion.

It is up to the editors to choose their foreign correspondents among men who fulfil these conditions—such men, however, must be allowed to work freely and not according to a set programme. It is a bad sign for the Press of a country and for its foreign news-service, when the editors decide what and how the correspondents are to report. A Press of this sort does more harm than good,

as it cannot give the public truthful information, but tries to lead it to foregone conclusions while concealing the true underlying motives. It is a matter of no importance who happens to exercise this influence—whether the tenor of reports is prescribed by ambitious editors, by newspaper proprietors who are more or less amateurs in the political field but successful financiers, or by the propaganda machine of totalitarian States. *Up till now no one has succeeded in arresting the march of truth, however great their incipient conquests may appear.* This at least is the lesson we can learn from history, although history is supposed to teach us nothing.

It goes without saying that a clear division between the administration and the editing of a paper is a *conditio sine qua non* of decent journalism. But even this very obvious condition is not easy to carry out in actual practice. Strong capitalist groups have means at their disposal, hidden levers such as an apparently motiveless increase or decrease of advertisements, by which they can exercise pressure on the tendency of a paper. It need not necessarily be done as openly as in that Viennese paper of which the following story was told. The editor sends for his art critic and says : “ Look here, you have just brought a second favourable article about a certain Velasquez. I don’t object on principle, but tell me frankly—does the fellow advertise ? ”

The newspapers are frequently guilty of underpaying their correspondents. There is no more pathetic sight than those badly paid journalists who hang round the Press departments of foreign governments, and by their very persons constitute an ever-present invitation to exercise undue influence. The editors are more to blame than the Government in question, for they are actually exposing their foreign correspondents to temptation, by paying them such inadequate salaries. Better no foreign correspondent at all than a hungry man out for all he can get ! I am glad to say that by now most countries seem to have realized this danger. According to my experience, the ideal foreign correspondent is an impartial observer who is aware of his responsibilities and economically independent owing to his adequate pay, working for an equally free, independent, and responsible paper. Such a man can attain a great position in foreign countries and is able to render his own

country inestimable services. Such men as the eminent correspondents of *The Times* and the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in pre-War Constantinople, were politically more influential than the ambassadors of their countries, and they proved the fact that the greatest achievements can be attained through journalism. This shows that the witty French saying that 'journalism can lead to anything as soon as you leave it,' is only partially correct.

I should like to add a few remarks about the relationship of the diplomat towards the journalist. I have already mentioned that most diplomats have no contact with the Press, and are often actually hostile to it. They are never quite sure how to handle a journalist, and only too frequently they meet him with a feeling of superiority mingled with fear of his possible indiscretions. As the diplomat is usually quite ignorant of the technique of the newspaper-world, he believes that a journalist earns his bread by spying out the supposed official secrets which the diplomat imagines he is guarding. If the journalists only knew how little actual knowledge is often concealed behind the silence of the diplomats, they would visit the embassies even less frequently than they do now.

When a diplomat and a journalist meet, the result is invariably a whimsical game of hide-and-seek between them. Usually the diplomat wins, which means that it was not the journalist who interviewed the diplomat, but vice versa.

The Press receptions of travelling political stars are different. The journalists assemble at the appointed hour in a reception-room of the legation or hotel in question. After a delay of at least half an hour, the statesman appears, followed by his suite, and reads out a vaguely formulated declaration, in which the political catchwords which happen to be the fashion are prettily varied and permuted. He speaks of 'mutual understanding' and 'moral disarmament' and 'existing questions of policy taken into account in adequate form.' Practised democratic statesmen like to open the reading of their subtle elaboration with a few improvised sentences. They introduce themselves to the journalists as former colleagues, who are no longer in a position to follow this profession dearest to their hearts. I

have known more than one sly old dog who actually had the crocodile tears in his eyes when he uttered these words—and naturally the journalists could not remain unmoved.

Political journalists have one weakness in common—a tendency to mild exaggeration. They are forced by their profession to bring out contrasts, and so they get into the habit of seeing everything, themselves included, under a spotlight. The political correspondent has usually knocked about in most quarters of the world and has hundreds of superficial acquaintances in every sphere and circle of human society, having met them at numerous luncheons, dinners, and receptions he has attended. A journalist collects people and connections as a philatelist collects stamps. Often such a collection of personalities is his only possession of value. If one of the people he has collected attains a high position, which is almost inevitable in these days of rapid political ups and downs, a figurative red mark is put beside his name. Our journalist remembers the delightful evening he spent with the famous man or the interesting conversation they had years ago, and in his imagination they have already become very good friends. A classic example of one of these belated friendships was the relationship of Bismarck to the well-known Berlin journalist, Maximilian Harden, which became more and more cordial as the years since Bismarck's death increased.

It is a terribly difficult thing for a real journalist to admit that he does not know a prominent personality connected with his field of activity. He usually looks upon a tentative hint at such a possibility as an insult to his professional honour, and what Karl Kraus once called the 'paper-feeling' is aroused in him. It is the same with important events—he must always be able to say: 'I was there.'

I once knew the correspondent of a large German newspaper trust, who claimed to have assisted at every decisive phase of both Germany's and Russia's policy. Several times he visited Bismarck at Friedrichsruh, it was he who warned Caprivi not to terminate the reinsurance contract between Germany and Russia. He had been an intimate at the Court of the Tsar, he had drunk tea with Lenin when the latter was an obscure revolutionary, he had argued whole

nights with Trotsky ; he left Port Arthur with Governor Alexejeff by the last train during the Russo-Japanese War, he advised against sending Colonel Nikolai during the battle of the Marne ; during the negotiations of Brest-Litowsk he discovered that Joffe had worked as his assistant-secretary for several months ; he accompanied Erzberger to Compiègne, and he watched the German Fleet steaming out to Scapa Flow. He was the most splendid and the nicest braggart and *cabotin* that I have ever met. When I praised his style, he promptly told me that the German Linguistic Society had sent him a telegram for his sixtieth birthday, congratulating him as the 'excellent master of style.' When I expressed my surprise that he never attacked Marshal Pilsudski with his vitriolic pen, he said casually that he had always followed the principle of excepting those persons from criticism whose hospitality he had enjoyed. He liked to leave the card of a politically prominent person—no one lower than the Minister for Foreign Affairs or the Marshal of the Senate would do—lying about casually on his table. I knew that it was expected of me to notice it, and out of respect for his age I never failed to do so, although I would sometimes let several minutes elapse before I fulfilled this duty. The conversation would develop with a certain uniformity, but I enjoyed it every time because of its delightful climax. It would be something like this : I felt impelled suddenly to 'notice' the card, and I would say with an exclamation of respectful admiration : "Oh, there is the Prime Minister's card ? Has he come to see you ?" He would look at me with an expression of weariness and boredom, and say with a shrug of his shoulders : "No, that is to say, yes ; he came here and wanted to speak to me, but I happened to be out." "And what did he want with you ?" "I don't know, hardly anything of importance to me." After a little pause would come the masterful conclusion with a glance across to the window : "I wish people would leave me alone."

I owe my knowledge of the beginnings of journalistic technique to this 'character,' who notwithstanding his highly developed professional failings was a really splendid fellow. He put me through a kind of journalistic course. He taught me to compose a wire correctly, and to make

extracts from speeches and governmental declarations which were faithful and at the same time readable. He was a past-master of all the arts and tricks of his profession, and among other things he knew exactly how to penetrate a police-cordon at public celebrations or functions, when one has lost one's invitation card. I pass on his advice, although I am aware that this method can only be attended by success in the East. The first condition is to possess a top-hat, for that head covering confers dignity and respect on its wearer. If this condition is fulfilled, you ask some member of the public whether he would like to come on to the reserved stand with you. Having done this, you walk up to the barrier with a purposeful air, taking your protégé with you. Then you pat the policeman on duty on the shoulder, with a debonair air, and say decidedly, in a tone that admits of no contradiction, pointing to your companion with your umbrella : " This gentleman is coming in with me."

Unfortunately, I could only enjoy the society of this dear old fellow for a few months. Soon after my arrival in Warsaw he died as a real journalist—in harness. I have met dozens of other journalists who suffered more or less from the professional malady of seeing their own rôle in life through a magnifying lens. I believe I have found quite a simple explanation for this phenomenon.

A journalist's job is to be present at important events and subsequently to describe them. If he does not write about them, they are unimportant. On the other hand, he can impart a certain importance to even negligible events by the manner in which he presents them. This capacity of his leads in time to a blurring over, even to a transposition of the connection of cause and effect. He himself is pushed more and more into the centre in *lieu* of the event in question, until he reaches the last stage of the professional disease and the event is ennobled by the fact of his presence. The happening becomes important *because* he was there.

A word or two about Polish journalism, with which I was associated for many years in the capacity of a colleague. In Poland, as in the other states that came into existence at the end of the War, journalism played a much greater and more responsible rôle than in the old states. These

young nations who had only just awakened to an independent life of their own, had first to be formed and instructed in the duties which their existence as a state entailed. As books and pamphlets never sell in great numbers in Poland, it was up to the journalists to take the lion's share of the important and necessary task of popular re-education. It can be stated that the journalists of Poland have sometimes overshot the mark but never missed it. Subjectively they may have often been mistaken—that is human. But nobody can deny that they have a great moral sense of their obligations and true love of their country, and that is a great deal. They have also built up an admirable organization which watches over the moral rectitude of the fraternity, which might well be taken as an example by many other countries. It is, therefore, not surprising that the journalistic profession is highly respected in Poland, an attitude which the Polish newspaperman owes exclusively to himself and his sincere efforts.

## CHAPTER TEN

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### SIDELIGHTS ON THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC. FROM EBERT TO HITLER VIA THOIRY. GERMAN FOREIGN SERVICE

IN MARCH 1927 THE post of a Press Attaché had become vacant at the German Legation in Warsaw. As I had in the meantime acquired a thorough knowledge of Polish matters, and both the German Foreign Office as well as my directors were satisfied with my reports for the Wolff-Bureau, I entertained hopes of receiving this honourable and also well-paid position. I knew that I had several rivals, but I did not think it wise to ask for the post and instead relied on the recommendation of the actual work I had done up to that time. I was further encouraged in this attitude by an acquaintance of mine in the German Foreign Office, who told me that no matter what I did, nothing could stop me becoming a member of the German Legation in Warsaw within a few weeks. And so it turned out. The vote of my respected friend, the minister Ulrich Rauscher, most certainly decided in my favour. I was to work for many years in the closest collaboration with him.

Ulrich Rauscher was one of the most gifted and brilliant figures of republican Germany. This Swabian from Stuttgart combined the imagination of a poet with the versatility of a practised journalist, the adroitness of a born diplomat, with the far-seeingness of a statesman. Although he was a politician through and through, he was passionately devoted to literature. Even when he was overburdened with work, he always found a few minutes in the morning to read some verses by the poet he loved best, Rainer Maria Rilke.

The meteoric career of this South German, who was a democrat of the purest water, began at Strasbourg. He once told me that he had to give up his citizenship of Wuerttemberg and become a Prussian subject in order to be appointed as *Referendar* in Alsace-Lorraine. He pointed out that the knowledge of this detail alone should suffice to explain why Imperial Germany never succeeded in winning the independent alemanic population of Alsace. The so-called 'Reichslande' of Alsace-Lorraine had been treated like a Prussian colony. At that time Germany was still haunted by the superannuated idea of the iron grip of Prussia.

Young Rauscher soon grew dissatisfied with working at his dry documents, and so he began to write articles for the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. A review he wrote on the collected essays of the brilliant Austrian writer, Ferdinand Kuernberger, which was reprinted within a few days by three hundred German newspapers, made Rauscher famous overnight as one of Germany's leading journalists. Then he began to write for the *Simplizissimus* and the *Vossische Zeitung*. He fought through the War as a gunner, and for a time worked in the Press-department of the German military authorities in Belgium. A few days after the collapse of the Reich, after he had joined the Social-Democratic Party, he appeared in the anteroom of Friedrich Ebert, who was then a representative of the people and later became the first President of the Weimar Republic.

Rauscher was Ebert's most faithful and active helper in those stormy and turbulent days, when the authority of the Government often did not extend further than the next street-corner. Soon afterwards he was made chief of the Press. He was the originator of Scheidemann's well-known speech against the conditions of Versailles, with the famous simile of 'the hand that would sooner wither' than sign this treaty. As we all know, it did not wither. During the *Kapp-Putsch* it was also Rauscher who wrote the proclamation of the general strike in furious haste, while General von Luettwitz's troops were already advancing into the Government quarter of Berlin. At the last minute he succeeded in breaking through the cordon and getting the manifesto, which he had furnished with the signature of

the Socialist Party leader, safely to the printers. This brought about the decision, and the nationalistic Putsch collapsed twenty-four hours later.

Only in a distant future will justice be done to the work of those men who defied a world of outer and inner foes, in order to erect a free and democratic Germany. It is unjust to dismiss Ebert as a small and narrow-minded party-politician, for in the decisive hours of his career he proved himself to be a true patriot. It was he who persuaded the Social-Democratic Party in October 1918—against the advice of Scheidemann—to assume the responsibility for Germany's future. He succeeded with great skill, after the collapse of the German Empire, in out-manceuvring those powers of the Left who wished to form a dictatorship of the Proletariat. It was largely due to his efforts that the Spartacist revolution was suppressed. To-day we are only too apt to forget that the Weimar Republic had to be erected on the smouldering ruins which the Empire had left behind. Probably the idea of building up a formal democracy on the foundation of these ruins was audacious. It transcended the political capabilities of the German people and it suffered from the same constructive errors as the Polish democracy.

Ulrich Rauscher used to talk to me for hours, often right through the night, describing the superhuman obstacles which had to be overcome in order to establish the Weimar Republic. His descriptions convinced me that the leading men in Weimar were actuated by the single-minded desire of bringing all classes and religions together into a true national community. In spite of the short duration of the Weimar Republic, it must always remain a great achievement of German democracy to have prepared the ground on which Germany could be built up once more, in those days of extreme stress and danger.

In 1921 Friedrich Ebert appointed Ulrich Rauscher German Minister to Georgia. After this independent Caucasian Republic had collapsed, he was transferred, in the spring of 1922, to Warsaw. In spite of the chronic state of tension between Germany and Poland, he succeeded with extraordinary skill in making a strong and respected position for himself and for his country. He knew that

it was impossible to establish good relations between the two countries, as long as the official German policy adhered to the aim of getting back the Polish corridor, in order to re-establish the connection which had existed before the War between East Prussia and the main body of Germany. Therefore he devoted all his energies to improving the economic and cultural relations between the two nations.

All through the years of the German-Polish economic war he fought a heroic battle on two fronts, against Polish and against German nationalism, hoping to unite the two countries which were so dependent on each other. The individual stages of this *via crucis*, which lasted many years, represented the different phases in the struggle for the Polish contingencies of coal and pigs. It was a case of continual bargaining. Again and again the Privy Counsellors appeared with new propositions, which in their turn were rejected by some Polish or German authorities, and Rauscher never wearied of taking up the threads again, even though they were continually being severed.

One day a pedantic German economic expert had come to Rauscher in order to bring forward new propositions in the already legendary matter of the export of pigs. The expert said :

"Do you think that the Poles will accept our proposition this time?"

"It is not impossible," said Rauscher, "we shall have to try."

"In case they reject it, I have a possible proposition B, or the altered proposition C. Do you think it would be feasible, in case the Poles should have objections to C, that they might accept the modified scheme D?"

In this manner he continued through various other letters of the alphabet, until Rauscher's patience came to an end, and he said, in an ironical tone :

"My dear X, if you want an answer to all these questions, you must go to somebody who ranks higher than I do—I am only a minister."

"And who ranks higher than you?" the simple-minded pedant inquired.

"A prophet," was Rauscher's reply.

The Legation was extremely hospitable, and often it

resembled a bee-hive. Everybody who was somebody in Warsaw frequented it. Rauscher had not forgotten his training as a journalist and was fully aware of the advantages of a large circle of acquaintances. Sometimes the German Ambassador in Moscow, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, would come to Warsaw in order to discuss current questions of Eastern policy with Rauscher. This would always be the signal of heightened activity. Brockdorff-Rantzau, who had rightly refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles, had already become an almost historical figure. He was a true aristocrat from head to foot, and at the same time he was a good German democrat in his own way. Certainly Republican Germany possessed in him a self-willed but brilliant diplomat of great calibre, and a far-seeing political observer. It is true that his manner of life was exceedingly strange, and it was not always easy to work under him or with him. He invariably turned night into day, and often he would have the secretaries who had been assigned to him fetched out of their beds at 1 a.m. in order to inform them that he expected them to dinner at 3 a.m. If he was in a good humour, Count Brockdorff-Rantzau could display sparkling wit as a conversationalist. On one occasion when his host presented him after luncheon with an enormous cigar, which was named after a colleague for whom he had no particular regard, a well-known ambassador of Germany during the war, Brockdorff said after the first puff: "Just what I thought—well-wrapped outside, hollow inside."

This interesting man had, through his faithful adherence to the policy outlined at Rapallo, made a great position for himself in Moscow, although no greater contrast could be imagined than that between him and a Red commissar. It is, however, possible that this very disparity was the foundation of the good relations of mutual confidence which developed between him and the Russian leaders. Brockdorff-Rantzau was the last *grand seigneur* in German politics.

He and Ulrich Rauscher continued for years to be the pillars of Eastern policy—which Stresemann was apt to neglect. That great statesman of democratic Germany had only one aim and one idea: to re-establish Germany's

sovereignty over the entire realm and to free the Rhineland from foreign military occupation. This caused Germany's Eastern policy to be relegated to the background of his mind.

The central pivot of Stresemann's system was the bringing about of a lasting friendship between Germany and France. He believed that this was, not only from the German, but from the European point of view, an absolute necessity for the permanent pacification of Europe. I believe everybody must agree with him there—and the experiences of the last years have proved only too clearly that all the other systems, united fronts and axes, are not sufficient to ensure peace, which all European statesmen pretend to look upon as their highest aim. Germany and France are, if we agree to regard Russia as a non-European State, the only Continental States who can exercise a lasting and decisive influence in political, intellectual, and economic matters on the other European nations. During the last three centuries there were only two civilizations on the mainland of Europe who gave other peoples more than they received—and there were the nations of Germany and France.

A symbiosis of these civilizations would be a safeguard for the white race for many centuries to come, for all attempts at disturbing the peace would be shattered against the bronze rock of a real friendship between these two nations. The French and the Germans are also the only peoples who, if they were united, could count on a large European following. They alone could form the nucleus of a European League of Nations. The entire East of Europe, the Danube Basin, and the Balkans are spiritually dependent on Germany and France. There is no emanation of German or French culture which has not aroused some form of echo in the wide belt which stretches from Finland to the Peloponnesus. Certainly all these smaller peoples have their original native culture, but its function has chiefly been to assimilate and to digest the intellectual values they received from France and Germany in the form most suitable to their national peculiarities. If you analyse the intellectual heritage of a typical East European, you will invariably find a usually larger French and German sector, besides the purely national one. The proportion between the German and the

French sector varies in peoples, as in individuals, according to taste, character, and the form their education has taken. In all these countries there is no personality of importance in whom one cannot recognize these two influences. And yet for nearly a thousand years these valuable forces have been turned against each other to the detriment of Europe and a policy of might has estranged these two great nations, and in the course of history they have become hereditary enemies who have crossed swords on numberless occasions.

After the Ruhr policy, which was founded on might and oppression, had collapsed, it appeared as though methods of negotiation more worthy of humanity were going to be employed. This led to the conference of Locarno which we hailed as the first step on the long way to enduring peace. At last the dense darkness of night over Europe appeared about to be dispelled. The noblest spirits of Germany and France were inspired by a sincere desire for mutual understanding. We believed in the power of Stresemann and Briand, and we hoped that the battle-axe would be buried for ever. Once again the tortured and often disillusioned inhabitants of Europe were expecting the dawn of a better era. It was not to be.

After a few months had elapsed we were forced to realize that the Treaty of Locarno was interpreted differently on the opposite sides of the Rhine. In Germany, where the ruling classes of the Republic were really and wholeheartedly longing for peace, public opinion could not understand why France was freeing herself so slowly of the fear lest her eastern frontier be threatened anew. It was expected as a matter of course that the Rhineland would be evacuated, the Saar question settled, and that the German people, by reason of the equality of rights, would receive the right of self-determination solemnly proclaimed by President Wilson. Nothing of all this happened. The French Government, faced with the unalterable nationalism of the wealthy *bourgeoisie*, was incapable of a strong political move. In endless negotiations, which did much to weaken the confidence of the German people in democracy, only a few unimportant concessions were attained. The Rhineland remained occupied for years and when Stresemann died in 1929 French troops were still on German soil.

The attitude of France towards the *Anschluss* remained inflexible, for the goal of Paris was not the right of self-determination of the peoples, but the securing of France's sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. The well-known French writer, Vladimir d'Ormesson, designated the anti-*Anschluss* policy as a measure to keep Germany from falling back into the Pan-Germanic temptation. Those who thought of the security of France imagined that the only way of serving it was by maintaining her military superiority. French politicians took the erroneous view that their only task was to hold fast to the powerful position achieved by France in 1919, without having the courage to work at removing the causes for future conflicts. Naturally this could not have been done without sacrificing anything. The French disarmament thesis, constantly referring to the wartime potentiality of German industry, and the numerous population of Germany, was conceived under the influence of this mistaken idea of security.

The deep chasm which divided the German from the French ideology might still have been formally bridged over, so long as the two statesmen of sincere goodwill, Briand and Stresemann, were steering the ships of their respective countries with a firm hand. The meeting in the inn at Thoiry in 1927, when Stresemann attempted to reach an all-embracing solution, was the climax of the attempts at, and also of the hopes of, a Franco-German understanding. In the modest inn-parlour, which is still hung with pictures and autographs of the two statesmen, the fate of Europe was probably decided. On that day the realization had to be faced that in France the psychological and internal political premises for an understanding with Germany were not yet present. France had not yet recovered from the horror of the Great War and the occupation of her northern territories. Even Briand had to tell Stresemann that France was not yet ripe for an understanding.

For the German republic, which was throwing all its youthful enthusiasm into the idea of an understanding with France, the failure of Thoiry was a catastrophe. Unwittingly France had planted the seed of death into the still tender body of German democracy. To-day it is not much good discussing what might have come about, if the *bourgeoisie*

of France had been more far-seeing and more generous. It would only be an historical example of *l'esprit d'escalier*. It is certain that the Western democracies are cursed with politicians who resemble the petitioner leaving the audience-chamber and remembering only after it was too late what he wanted to ask for. They will go down in history as the masters of missed opportunities.

We, who still believed in the possibility of a happy Europe, a Europe where the nations could live in peaceful competition, where the national would be tamed by the super-national, and the super-national ennobled by the national, realized with horror and dismay that all our hopes and all our striving were once more to be in vain. With all my heart, with all the intensity of my political thinking I had striven for a Franco-German *entente*, and I expected that, after the political understanding had been reached, an interchange of German and French culture would lead to the richest results.

Like Stefan George, I, too, felt the mystic call of the West. I, too, could hear 'greeting in the wind, where the plains of the Meuse and the Marne lay sweet and fertile in the light of dawn.' To-day the German, who has become a stranger to Latin form and grace, sees only the Maginot Line when he looks upon these plains. Once more he thinks in terms of military deployment—areas, points of support, and bridgeheads.

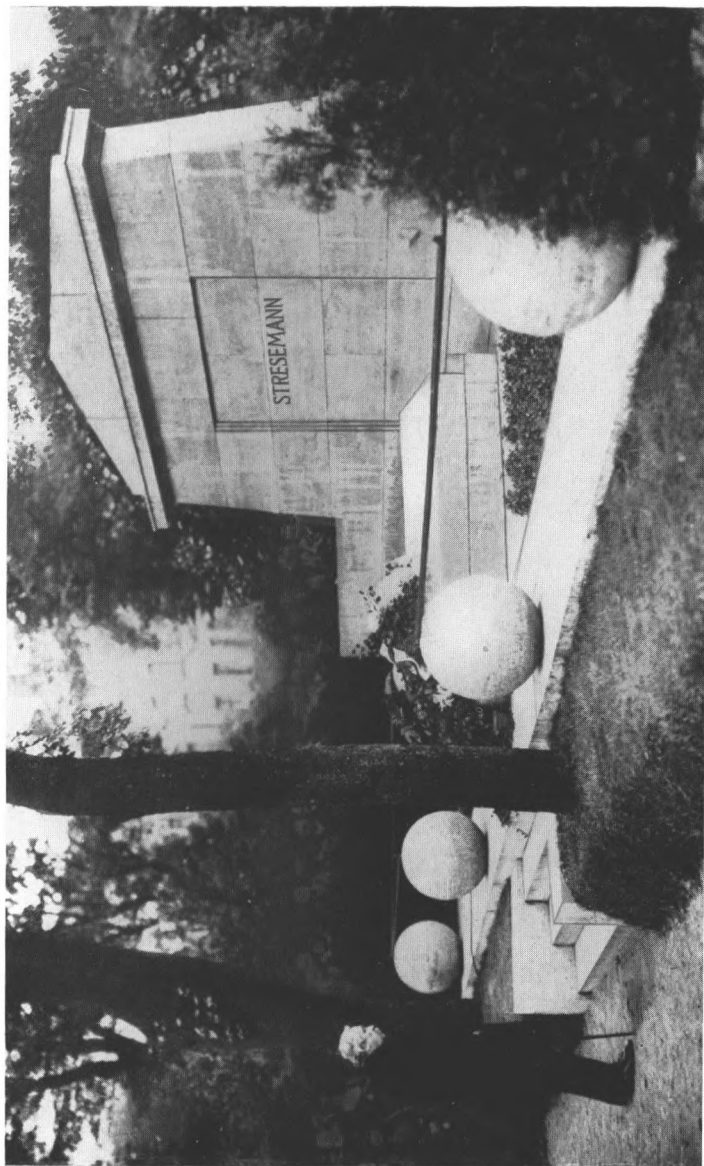
I foresaw at the time, when I read the reports about the meeting at Thoiry, that future developments would be such. I was broken-hearted when I saw the political dream of my life dissolve into nothingness. The events that followed developed with the inexorable fatefulness of a Greek tragedy.

Stresemann continued to pursue his aim with admirable persistence. He was convinced that he must succeed in persuading not only the French parties of the Left, but those of the Centre and Right that a Franco-German understanding was absolutely necessary. The moves he made on the political chessboard were correct in themselves, but as he felt his end approaching and wanted to fulfil the task he had set himself at any price, he made, under the whip of his illness, every move too soon. Only when we look at them from this angle can we understand Germany's premature

demands for a revision of the Dawes Plan, which finally ended in the equally unsatisfactory Young Plan. And it was actually the resistance to the Young Plan which gave National Socialism in Germany the impetus that led to Adolf Hitler's first decisive victory at the general election of 1930. When, in the same year, Briand and Laval came to Berlin to visit the Government, it was already too late. Gustav Stresemann was dead. The Foreign Office was under the direction of his less efficient successor Curtius. Briand, on whom death had also set his seal, laid a wreath on the tomb of his friend Stresemann. It was a symbolic action, for this last homage to Stresemann was also a homage to the noble ideal which was buried with him, the ideal of a real friendship between two powerful nations. A few months later Aristide Briand breathed his last. An opportunity which might not recur in a hundred years had been missed.

We in Warsaw followed every phase of this historical drama with intense interest. Every change in the relations between France and Germany reacted automatically on the foreign policy of Poland. The Polish Government's policy was anything but favourable to a Franco-German *entente*. Everything possible was done to furnish the French parties of the Right with arguments against such an understanding, as Warsaw feared, not unreasonably, that Poland would be called upon to pay the price. The German corridor propaganda was countered by a Polish Press campaign, wherein the spectre of Germany's unbridled urge for expansion to the East was successfully revealed. Thus for many years a kind of trench-warfare of propaganda, rising at times to cannonades of abuse, with the object of winning world-opinion and in the course of which Germany appeared to be making slow but steady advance, went on between the German republic and Poland.

Stresemann's aim in this propaganda concerning the corridor was not confined to detaching Poland from the French alliance as a matter of external politics, but was also intended to focus the attention of German nationalism on Poland as its possible prey. Stresemann's entire foreign policy was built up on friendship with the two great Anglo-Saxon powers, friendship with Russia in the spirit of the treaties of Rapallo and Berlin, and good relations to



*Photo: Keystone*

Briand at the grave of Stresemann.



*Photo - Keystone*

President Hindenburg looks on as Herr Hitler acknowledges the salutes of his followers, May 1933.

Italy. The crowning of the whole system was supposed to be the alliance with France.

The Berlin Foreign Office, which, like the other great organizations of German bureaucracy, had gone through the confusion of the Revolution, and the first stormy years of the Republic, proving itself to be as adaptable as it was lasting and strong, hesitated at first to adopt Stresemann's policy. The Foreign Office had had too many masters during the years of the Revolution, so that it was bound to regard each new policy with a certain scepticism. But when the Foreign Office began to feel the hand of the master, and became convinced that the new course promised lasting security for Germany, it submitted willingly and with increasing sympathy to Stresemann's leadership. This was all the more remarkable as German diplomacy was recruited almost exclusively from the ranks of the aristocracy and the upper middle classes, for whom a German national and monarchistic policy was a matter of course. According to the Leftist parties the Foreign Office represented a centre of all reactionary elements, who owing to the weakness and patience of the Republic were allowed to carry on the undemocratic spirit of Imperial Germany.

It cannot be denied that the clannishness of the feudal students-corps, such as the *Bonner Preussen* and the *Saxo-Borussen*, continued to play as great a part in the Foreign Office of the Republic as it had done in the old days. Yet even Stresemann, whose attitude towards the nobility was invariably a critical one, had employed members of the former ruling classes with great success in important posts of the foreign service, where they became his best and most faithful helpers.

The Foreign Office of the Weimar Republic was a remarkable institution. It is well known that the German nation has the reputation of lacking diplomatic talent. In spite of the enormous mistakes of German pre-War diplomacy this generalization is unjust. Great names such as those of the Austrian, Prince Kaunitz, the Rhinelander, Prince Metternich, the North German, Otto von Bismarck, and the son of a Berlin innkeeper, Stresemann, should in themselves be sufficient proof to the contrary. It might be objected that every exception proves the rule, but that again is

incorrect, for Imperial Germany had a number of excellent diplomats at important posts, men who not only judged the situation correctly, but also fulfilled their national duties faithfully by reporting on it adequately.

The history of the relations between Britain and Germany during the Wilhelminian period is a classical example. The German Embassy in London never ceased to utter warnings, but Berlin would not listen. Graf Bernstorff, the former Counsellor in London and later Ambassador in Washington, once said that all the German diplomats who had been in London both before, during, and after his time, had had no doubts as to the inevitability of a collision between Britain and Germany, unless an agreement were reached about the Fleet and the question of Baghdad. Thus the guilty ones were not Count Wolff-Metternich or his successor, Prince Lichnowsky, but the German system of government which assigned an inferior position to the men who were responsible for the country's foreign policy.

This explains how it was possible that not the Foreign Office and its representatives, but Admiral Tirpitz actually formed the German-British relations. It is the old story of the body whose arm instead of whose head decides its actions. As long as he lived, Bismarck, who was well aware of this hereditary ailment of German politics, waged an heroic battle against the influence of the Army in German politics. The chancellors who followed him lacked the knowledge, the character, or the power to carry on successfully this fight which was so necessary for Germany's existence. This led to the development of the so-called 'immediate posts,' who provided the Emperor with direct information—which had the further disadvantage of robbing Germany's foreign policy of its unity. It is a strange coincidence of history that the Third Reich now appears to be relapsing into the same mistake of a divided foreign policy.

Whatever one may think of the Weimar Republic, one must admit that, considering the military weakness and the political division of Germany, its foreign policy was good and successful. Everywhere in history we see that the vanquished and the weak have been impelled to use the only expedient at their disposal—political intelligence. The noxious

influences had been removed, the Army relegated to its proper place, and for the first time since Bismarck, the Chancellor and the Foreign Office decided the foreign policy. This was naturally also conducive to strengthening the self-confidence and the sense of responsibility of German diplomacy. The Prussian *Untertanensinn* (loyalty of a subject, implying that he is downtrodden), conceived by the spirit of the Barracks, now gave way to a true feeling of responsible citizenship. In theory, the German, even of the Wilhemian period, could develop an immoderate love of liberty, especially as a student, while drinking a toast and bawling songs of 1848 about 'the God who let iron grow and therefore wanted no slaves.' But as 'all theory is grey' the same Germans, when they had become sensible and worldly wise, would bow down before the Imperial know-all in order to climb as high as possible in the Power Organization of Germany. Naturally these men sometimes developed admirable efficiency, but the chief fault of the system was that it set no store by individual character, and sometimes actually rewarded lack of character. The Byzantinism rife at the Court of Berlin, of which the many volumes of memoirs published since the War give a vivid picture, was poisoning the whole of public life and threatened to infect even the character of the nation.

For a time the Republic improved this, although it was again threatened by the party spirit, which was finally to destroy it under the plea of uniting the nation. It is obviously extremely difficult for the Germans to find the golden mean of a sensible citizenship, between anarchistic party politics and the servile obedience to authority. This was not only brought about by the inner collapse of the ruling classes, but also by the inability of the German Republic to develop a firm ruling class of its own. There were some promising beginnings, and the Foreign Office was among the most hopeful products of the new spirit. The men who worked there, although the foundations were German-National, were linked by their principles with all kinds of parties. Yet this did not hinder them from working harmoniously, voluntarily, and with admirable persistence at the re-establishment of the German Fatherland. They worked for this aim, and for this aim alone, without sparing

themselves. The relations between superiors and inferiors were good and human ones, based on a spirit of comradeship and concerted effort. At the same time the whole office was filled with that industrious optimism which is one of the pleasantest qualities that flourish in the atmosphere of Berlin. Work became a pleasure, or at least a matter of course, and one saw none of those depressed and ill-humoured figures which used to haunt the passages of the Chancellery in Vienna. In Berlin they believed in the future—in Vienna they were sorrowing for the past. I need hardly stress the fact that in Berlin I found—professionally—the home which my own diminished country, so grievously hit by fate, could offer me no longer.

From the point of view of organization the German foreign service was built up in a masterly manner. The complicated machinery functioned with exactitude and with an extraordinarily high output for a bureaucratic organization. What I would like to call the pyramid of the news-service was especially well constructed. The ruling personalities were continually kept *au courant* of important events without being submerged in a stream of news by a process of ceaseless sifting, editing, and transmission of only important facts to the superior branch. In Vienna, I saw only too frequently how important reports were overlooked by leading personalities, because they were submerged in an overwhelming flood of unimportant details.

The Republican officials began to offer a pleasing contrast in their outer demeanour from their Imperial predecessors. They no longer regarded themselves as the superiors of the public, but as their helpers, they no longer ordered people about, they advised them. In the place of tactless arrogance came—marvellous to relate—a modest and courteous demeanour. Perhaps their behaviour in society was a little stiff, their politeness a little stilted, but, nevertheless, the improvement was great. Even the good old Prussian snarl was but rarely heard. In a word, the number of Germans who did not look upon 'making a row' as a national virtue was increasing in a quite alarming fashion. This changed tone even penetrated into the new Army, the *Reichswehr*, a circumstance due to the efforts of its great creator, General von Seeckt. The type of German pre-War officer, who, by abrupt

and snarling speech, expressed his class arrogance towards the despised civilians, made way for a new genus who combined dignity with friendliness to the people.

Naturally, this entire development, which I have only been able to sketch here, was not complete. If it had been, German democracy would still exist to-day. Nevertheless, Germany had grown quieter, one felt more at home there, and one could entertain a hope that the shrilly proclaimed catchwords of 'shining armour,' 'mailed fist,' and 'dry gunpowder' had disappeared for ever. Alas, it was not to be. The Western Powers, who could not overcome their war psychosis, continued to humiliate the German democracy, until finally losing the will to live, it succumbed to the economic crisis and the attacks of National Socialism. A sorry triumph for far-seeing statesmanship! Had not the Western powers gone to war in 1914 in order to make an end to the dangerous autocracy of Kaiser Wilhelm and to destroy the militaristic Junker class? Why, then, would they not believe in their own success, when the German Empire had fallen and the German people had given itself a democratic Government? They looked upon the Weimar Republic as a devilish illusion invented by the cunning Germans, like Potemkin's villages; a malicious camouflage which only proved again how profoundly the nation was to be mistrusted. When they came to their senses, it was already too late and the National Socialist avalanche had begun to move.

While these historical events were being prepared in Germany, we in Warsaw continued to cultivate German-Polish relations as best we could, between one crisis and the next. As besides my duties at the Legation I was also working for the Wolff Bureau, I was up to my neck in hard work for several years. Ulrich Rauscher had full understanding for the fact that in my capacity as adviser on matters of Polish policy, I was not to be subjected to the customary official standards, and he left me free to make my own arrangements about my work. When there were a few rare days of political calm, I would travel in search of information to the most out-of-the-way places in Poland, and several times a year I went to Berlin. There I visited the chief of the Government Press Department and the leading

personalities of the Eastern division of the Foreign Office. Only this liberty of movement put me in the position of being always *au fait* with not only all Polish matters, but also with the Polish-German relationships of the moment ; so I was able to fill my post in every respect.

My chief, Ulrich Rauscher, suddenly fell seriously ill in November 1930. The Warsaw doctors did not know what was the matter with him. Although he got weaker and weaker, and could only speak in a very feeble voice, he used to send for me every day, as he wished me to give him my usual report and keep him informed. During his illness he completed his last work, a brilliant study on Clémenceau, which appeared in a Berlin periodical after his death. As he gradually became worse, he went to Berlin to visit a specialist, and the latter found that he suffered from laryngeal tuberculosis. He sent Rauscher immediately to St. Blasien in the Black Forest. Two weeks later Ulrich Rauscher passed peacefully away.

In our small German circle in Warsaw, as well as in the entire Diplomatic Corps, the news of his death caused grief and consternation. It was difficult to believe that this happy and work-loving man, who apparently enjoyed the best of health, should be no more. It was with a deep sense of personal loss that I stood at his grave. He was buried in the forest cemetery at St. Blasien, and the Secretary of State, von Bülow, gave the funeral oration.

On a cold day in the early spring of 1931 the members of the German Legation in Warsaw were assembled at the station in order to welcome the new Minister, Hans Adolf von Moltke. His personality afforded a striking contrast to that of the lively and versatile South German. He was the typical Prussian nobleman, grave, solemn and tall ; he had a cultivated and distinctive personality. At the Foreign Office he had had the reputation of being a clever, unhurried and warm-hearted official. He deserved it, and besides being a great worker he resembled his famous great-uncle, Helmuth von Moltke, in that he could keep silent and was a good listener. No two people could have been more different in their methods of work than Rauscher and Moltke. While Rauscher used to dictate his dispatches in flying haste, Moltke would slowly add sentence to sentence, considering and

weighing the full import of every phrase and even of every word. In both cases the finished result was a masterpiece, and we used to say jokingly that these Warsaw dispatches would one day represent the cabinet pieces of future document collections.

Even in Warsaw we were beginning to feel the pressure of the political and economic crisis which had overtaken Germany, and which Bruening was vainly attempting to ward off with his emergency decrees. The German democrats were fighting their last battle. Behind the scenes the sinister General von Schleicher was already pulling the wires. The Army had once more become a power in the hallowed body of the State. Some officials at the Legation, whose hearing was super-acute, were beginning to discover their sympathies for the totalitarian system. Germany was shaken as by a fever—Bruening fell. The circle round Schleicher presented the venerable President with a new Chancellor, Herr von Papen, of whom it was only known that he was in the habit of leaving dispatch-cases behind and of stirring up trouble within the Centre Party. It was an unfortunate chancellorship, which by ceaseless elections used up the last remaining capital of confidence in the Republic. Then came the short episode of Schleicher, when the practised intriguer revealed himself as a bad politician ; one more Parthian shot from Papen directed against his former friend Schleicher, and Adolf Hitler came into power.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

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### 'GLEICHSCHALTUNG,' THE JUGGERNAUT. FAREWELL TO WARSAW

THE DAY AFTER THE National Socialist Party had come into power I travelled from Munich to Berlin. The express was almost empty ; the only passengers were Nazi functionaries from the Brown House, who were obviously going to improve the shining hour and look for lucrative posts in Berlin. On the next day I had a long conversation with Dr. Funk, who had then been nominated Director of the Press, and was already looked upon as one of the Party's leading authorities on economics.

Funk had no difficulty in convincing me that a new era had dawned for Germany. I had already realized that nothing could stem the rising tide of National Socialism, once the flood-gates were opened. Personally, I had never been convinced by the rumours spread by Herr von Papen and his partisans to the effect that Hitler, Goering, and Frick would be merely political prisoners of their intellectually superior colleagues in the National Socialist Cabinet. My incredulity was not due to my superior political vision, but to the fact that I was convinced that Herr Hugenberg, the ill-starred leader of the German Nationalists, was a narrow-minded politician whose involved and seemingly acute calculations invariably turned out to be entirely fallacious.

When I visited Berlin again, a few days after the Reichstag fire, the city gave me the impression of being under military occupation. Enormous cars, Mercedes and Horchs, driven by men in S.A. and S.S. uniforms, sped madly through

the streets without heeding either the pedestrians or the rules of the road. Divisions of men, boys, and girls, singing Party songs, marched behind swastika banners towards some new goal. Day and night the flags were flying from all the houses, and great ribbons were stretched across the streets, printed with Nazi slogans, such as 'Fuehrer befiehl, wir gehorchen' ('Fuehrer command, we obey') or 'Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz' ('The good of the community comes before the good of the individual'). All the shop windows were filled with photographs of Adolf Hitler and his underlings. I could discover only one picture of a German of the pre-Nazi era, and that was Frederick the Great. Even Bismarck, who had formerly graced the windows of every nationalistic art dealer in Germany, had disappeared—presumably because of his unorthodox views on the Jewish question. I witnessed the same phenomenon in the book-shops: Nazi Party literature had crowded out everything else. The poets of the hour were no longer Goethe and Schiller, but Horst Wessel and Dietrich Eckhart.

In the Government quarter the doors of all the Ministries were guarded by sentries. The terrace of the Prince Albrecht Palais, where Josef Goebbels was then establishing his Ministry of Propaganda, was continually surrounded by men in black S.S. uniforms.

On the other side of the Wilhelmstrasse, at the Foreign Office, nothing appeared changed to the casual observer. The officials went about their duties, working as calmly as before, and welcomed visitors with that rather formal friendliness which is a common heritage of the diplomats of all countries. They would lead their visitor to a comfortable, leather-covered chair, which was placed, according to the time-honoured recipe, so that he should be dazzled by the full glare of the light, while the official, sitting with his back to the window, could watch him out of the shadows. The desk was littered with the usual pile of documents, but, as a concession to the spirit of the new era, a newly framed picture of the Fuehrer stood on it. Even during the preliminary conversation, the routine exchange of ideas on current political topics, I became aware of an unpleasant change in the atmosphere. The official, who was usually so firm and precise, appeared strangely ill at ease, and vague in

his utterances. His cheerful sense of responsibility had disappeared, and he seemed inclined to leave all necessary decisions to others. He had lost his self-confidence.

When the conversation turned to personal matters, such as questions of advancement and the possibility of being transferred, I witnessed a scene which was to become a ritual, for its repetition occurred with uncanny regularity. The official rose, murmuring an excuse, traversed the room and opened the door carefully. When he had looked up and down the passage to make sure that no listener was near, he again closed the door very softly. Then, and then only, he would reveal his innermost thoughts. Almost invariably it was the same story. The official was a prey to conflicting emotions and doubts, he could not make up his mind whether he should join the Party or not. He would assure me that he had always been a faithful servant of the State, and that he intended to remain one as far as possible. Up till then he had considered it his duty as a Civil Servant not to become involved in party politics. But now a party had come into power which was actually identifying itself with the State—and this party was upholding certain principles which he could not possibly condone. What was he to do? Herr X and Herr Y, his colleagues, had already put down their names for the Party, and there could be no doubt that they would find this very helpful to their rapid advancement. Yet surely, one could not outwardly conform to principles which one had to repudiate inwardly, no man could be expected to do such a thing. He was thoroughly disgusted with the work he had loved, with politics, with everything; he would have resigned immediately and looked for some neutral occupation—if only he had not to support a family on his pay, for the inflation had ruined him; but as he was faced with the alternative of begging in the streets with his wife and child, he would have to pocket his principles and make the best of a bad job.

In the course of time all of them made the best of a bad job, though very much against their will. At the time I am speaking of, however, they kept out of sight and remained motionless, like frightened mice, doing their best to carry on with their work. While protesting their loyalty to the new State, they countered the limitless totalitarian demands of

the National Socialist Party and the amateurish foreign policy of the different party centres, with a matter-of-fact common sense which the Nazi firebrands decried as passive resistance. This dissatisfaction with the Foreign Office led to the founding of rival undertakings in National Socialist quarters, such as Rosenberg's centre for foreign affairs, which was admittedly aimed at 'drying up' the Foreign Office—an expression then current in the Party jargon. It used to be said at the time that the Foreign Office was like Noah's Ark, in which oxen, asses, and camels were hoping to survive the flood of National Socialism. It cannot be denied that the majority of Foreign Office officials, like all other German intellectuals, had neither sympathy nor understanding for the integral nationalism preached by the Party. This explains the unbridled outbursts of hatred towards the *Intelligenzbestie* (intellectual beast) which are to be found in contemporary Nazi manifestos. The same feeling inspired these verses by a modern compatriot of Goethe :

‘ Intellekt !  
Hinweg mit diesem Wort dem boesen  
Mit seinem juedisch grellen Schein !  
Nie kann ein Mann von deutschem Wesen  
Ein Intellektueller sein.’

(‘ Intellect !  
Away with that word of evil  
With its strident Jewish shine.  
Ne'er can a truly German man  
An intellectual be.’)

Adolf Hitler himself has not much use for the German intelligentsia, but realizes that he cannot do without it altogether. In order to win at least the German nationalistic and the Old Prussian part of it for the Party, the celebration of the birth of the Third Reich was held, by a veritable stroke of genius, at the tomb of Frederick the Great in the *Garnisonskirche* of Potsdam. Under the shadow of the greatest Prussian king, who remains even to-day the idol of all Germans living north of the Main, Adolf Hitler thanked the venerable Field-Marshal President Hindenburg for his

'great-hearted resolve' to relinquish the reins of the Government to Young Germany. This gesture could not fail in its effect, for it convinced the simpler souls among the German Nationalists that Adolf Hitler's real aim was the founding of a realm of Hohenzollern orientation under the old black, white, and red flag. Only too soon they were to realize how grievously they had been mistaken.

The politically-minded among the members of the Old Prussian and Conservative parties were not so easy to convince, for Hitler's actions proved quite clearly that his aim was to paralyse the still existing remains of the former ruling classes in favour of a hierarchy of National Socialist leaders. Besides, the true German Conservative has a deep-rooted mistrust of all more or less proletarian mass-movements, as he knows through experience that they portend no good to him. The most one can expect of German Conservatives is to subscribe to the saying of Emperor Joseph II : " Everything for the people, nothing through the people." The majority would prefer the typical *Junker* travesty of the well-known Latin proverb : 'Vox populi, vox *Rindvieh*.' (*Rindvieh* : literally cattle, meaning ass.)

Schiller lets his ultra-Conservative Prince Sapielha express similar sentiments in *Demetrius*, where he says : " What is the majority? The majority is nonsensical ; sense has always pertained to the few."

Thus it came about that the speeches and actions of the Nazi leaders, calculated to work on the psychology of the masses, made no appreciable impression on the Conservatives.

" My brain is not attuned to receive the wave-length emanating from Adolf Hitler," a Prussian Conservative in a high position once said to me, in Berlin. But of what avail is scepticism and reserve, silent attention to duty and holding through, when the new rulers occupy all the key positions of the State in their victorious advance? That in itself makes them capable of exercising the maximum pressure on all those who are inclined to think differently.

The game was up for the German Nationalists when the Harzburg front collapsed, Hugenberg resigned and the German Nationalist Stahlhelm organization disappeared. The *bourgeoisie*, which was demoralized by the defeats of the

last decades, lost all sense of restraint and followed the overwhelmingly National Socialistic masses of the lower middle class to the Party centres, in order to enrol in the N.S.D.A.P. (National Sozialistische Deutsche ArbeiterPartei). The stormy and irresistible *Gleichschaltung* had begun, that apparently inexplicable phenomenon of unification which seized upon grocers and philatelists, and is so utterly at variance with the historically documented individualism and particularism of the German people.

It was wellnigh impossible to understand this mass process abroad. In non-German countries it had been overlooked that the social, economic, and structural upheavals which had shaken Germany during the last twenty years had left ineradicable traces on the psychology of the nation.

Germany, which now appears to the outside spectator as some monstrous and sinister machinery, had been, even before the National Socialist Party came into power, an agglomeration of similarly constituted machines. Germans, impoverished through war and inflation and dependent on the sliding scale of wages, had their being in the midst of these machines. As the Heidelberg philosopher, Karl Jaspers, said so rightly, nothing was left to the men of Germany but to stand at the best possible place by the machine. Nothing of the old individualism could possibly survive in the atmosphere of this new Germany which was a prey to all the furies of the modern economic system, for individuality is only a hindrance where mechanical appliances are concerned. When you are a cog in a machine it is not your individual performance which counts, but your average capacity for work. When the *Gleichschaltung* finally swamped all these great and small industrial concerns—to use the word in its widest sense—the great mass of Germans thought of nothing but to retain their place by the machine, in order to support themselves and their families. The Germans who adopted National Socialism in spring 1933 did not do so out of solidarity for Adolf Hitler, but for their wages. This process does not strike us as very idealistic, but nevertheless it is quite comprehensible from a human point of view, if we consider the circumstances prevalent at the time. For the politically uninformed it appeared as

a measure for personal safety and even more so to the politically minded, who are endowed by Nature with elastic principles.

After this first superficial *Gleichschaltung* a very peculiar process took place in the German mentality. Germans are not habitual conspirators ; they like to form unions, but they are not unionists. Unlike Slavs or southern Latins, they do not delight in duplicity for its own sake and they have no aptitude for the game of political double-crossing, at which Italian Carbonari or Russian Nihilists used to excel. The German likes to keep order in his inner world as well as in the outer one, so that he can lie down at night with a tranquil conscience after he has accomplished his day's work. He honestly desires to act according to his principles. This same German suddenly found himself, in spring 1933, confronted with an inexorable power with a rigid ideology which not only circumscribed his personal freedom but actually determined his every action. He found himself caught in a close net from which there was no escape.

There was only one way out for the unfortunate Germans : to *conform their principles to their actions*. The clever propaganda which made out that patriotism was equivalent to National Socialism assisted this inner reorganization, which took place at a slower or quicker pace according to the individuals it affected. It then came to light that the average German who had gone through *Gleichschaltung* in the manner described above, became a good and faithful worker in the National Socialist ant-hill. You may even find him among those who praise most emphatically and enthusiastically the achievements of the Third Reich and the historical greatness of Adolf Hitler. This, only superficially intriguing, riddle is easily solved when we consider the psychology of the average German, who had been worn down by the merciless economic struggle.

His attitude is not merely an attempt to drown the voice of his conscience, it springs from a misconception, postulated by the will to survive : the failure to recognize the difference between power and greatness. I should like to refer once more to the great Jakob Burckhardt, who also found the valid formula for this mental phenomenon which

recurs in every historical crisis. Seventy years ago, Burckhardt said in his memorable lecture on historical greatness : “ It is often not easy to distinguish between greatness and mere power, for the latter can dazzle us formidably when it has been newly acquired or greatly increased. The reason why we prefer to look upon those who exercise domination over our existence as great, is the desire to excuse our own dependence by the other’s greatness.”

Thus Germany was divorced from her ancient ideals under political, economic, and propagandist pressure. The ideal of a national state was blended with the ideal of racialism and given an aggressive and consciously anti-European tendency, which necessarily led to the mental and political isolation of the German people. In the place of the ancient Christian God and of the super-national idealism preached by the great German poets and philosophers, an idol was raised : the idol of the Nation—the nation as a community of blood, fate, labour, and principles. In the first few months following the *Gleichschaltung*, Germany resembled a block of ice slowly separating from the ice-field of the rest of Europe. At first there was only a crack, then a fissure growing gradually wider—and to-day Germany, following laws of her own, is drifting away into the sea of Time.

At first this decisive shifting of Germany’s balance was not very noticeable to us in Warsaw. The Foreign Office, in its dispatches, tried its best to awaken the impression that nothing had changed, and we carried on cheerfully with our duties at the Legation. Naturally this fiction could not be indefinitely kept up. Soon the orders we received began to appear slightly browned, and little by little they assumed the true brown tint of genuine Nazidom. Instead of the word ‘German,’ the word ‘National Socialist’ was automatically substituted wherever possible, just as ‘Germany’ was supplanted by ‘The New State.’ Employing stereotyped ‘dadaisms’ culled from the Party-jargon, such as *Anbruch*, *Umbruch*, *Aufbruch*, etc., the Foreign Office concentrated increasingly on the possibility of awakening sympathies abroad for the ideology of National Socialism. Comically—or tragically—enough, these elaborations were signed by people who were entirely out of sympathy with

Nazi ideals, people who made no secret of their attitude *in camera caritatis*. These gentlemen, with a wintry smile, had traced their names under these documents, and during the first few months of the change they did not mind if one took their orders with outward gravity, but not without a sly wink.

At about that time it often happened that mysterious messengers from various centres of the enormously inflated Party-machine appeared in Warsaw, on peculiar missions. These persons, who had read their Houston Stewart Chamberlain and their Artur Rosenberg with application and reverence, had got into the habit—which was not really surprising—of thinking in terms of continents and millennia. They could not be bothered with lesser quantities. They hinted at memoranda which they had to write for leading personalities, and their conversation was lavishly interlarded with vague but impressive utterances, such as ‘Ploughing up Germany’s foreign policy—ideological space and tension-frontiers. . . .’ These eminent beer-house politicians were mostly recruited from the ranks of unsuccessful journalists, retail exporters who had become bankrupt during the economic crisis, and unemployed Germans living abroad. The journalists were chosen for these missions because of their profound political knowledge, the exporters because they ‘knew foreign parts,’ and the Germans from abroad because they knew foreign languages. It is a well-known fact that in revolutionary times this latter capacity suffices to have a justified claim to diplomatic employment.

These amateurs of foreign affairs, who made up for work by enthusiasm, and for knowledge by slogans, were a constant source of worry to the Legations where they happened to appear. One never quite knew what to do with them. It was impossible to introduce them officially, as they were not formally accredited, nor was their mental calibre such that they could have been looked upon as valuable political experts. As these emissaries were convinced that they knew everything better than the Foreign Office—according to them, rotten to the core—and its employees, they had to be handled as carefully as raw eggs. The Legation usually employed the classic method of disarming them by never-

ending dinner-parties within the exclusively German circle, where food and especially drink had to be of the very best. It is an indisputable fact that the world appears changed for the better after the third bottle of Burgundy, and even if you are a true man of Germany and despise both ‘Frenchies’ and diplomats, you have no objection to drinking their wines. Even National Socialist gullets are not solely actuated by patriotic considerations. When we had reached the stage of brandy and cigars, we were usually able to ascertain that these formidable Nazis were fairly harmless individuals, who often experienced a child-like delight at being allowed to travel abroad at other people’s expense.

These gentlemen were wont to spend the last day of their stay at the Legation, where they took a lightning course on the politics of the country they happened to be in. Even they could not write memoranda consisting solely of ideological theses. So we could enjoy the spectacle of watching these amateur diplomats quite tamely taking down notes at the dictation of a bored official ; although the latter’s very justified boredom would be concealed under the mask of keen officialdom—the man had to think of his career ! Some of the amateurs took it even more easily—they simply copied out the most important sentences from the most recent dispatches, so as to be spared the unaccustomed labour of formulating ideas. Of course all these activities were entirely futile, but it appears to be a characteristic of all revolutions to squander the citizens’ money in a foolish and irresponsible manner.

About six months after Adolf Hitler had come into power, the first effects of the *Gleichschaltung* began to make themselves felt in the distant German community of Warsaw. The first sign was the fact that an unimportant official of the Legation, who had occupied a subordinate clerical post and had always lived in happy anonymity, was suddenly raised to the position of *homme de confiance* of the Party, and became one of the most important men in the German colony. He owed his nomination to the circumstance that he was the only German in Warsaw who had already been a National Socialist and a member of the Party before March 1933. Thus he became, so to speak, the warden of German ideology,

and his duty was to watch over the human, moral, and especially political trustworthiness of the members of the German colony. The diplomatic staff of the Legation was also entrusted to his care. This man had not only the right, but the duty, to spy on the actions of the Germans in Warsaw, to examine their relations to National Socialism, and to inform Party Headquarters as soon as something appeared dubious to him. Owing to the merciless tactics of the Party, a report to the effect that a man was not positively supporting National Socialism invariably resulted in his being removed from his post, and either discharged or subjected to other grave penalties. It was not surprising that everybody queued up to get on the right side of the Party-man.

It was diverting to watch how the solidarity with the people, preached by National Socialism, first took effect. Many of the haughtier members of the German colony, who would never have dreamt of consorting with an unimportant consular employee, were known to slink secretly to his lodgings in order to ingratiate themselves. Although, as long as I can remember, I have been singularly free from class-consciousness, I did not feel myself called upon to visit the Party-man—who, by the way, was an entirely likeable person—for the sole reason that political developments had made me dependent on him. To his honour be it said that he did not hold my failure to kowtow to him against me, and only rather shyly hinted once or twice at the fact that we never met.

At the end of 1933 the dams of the old order burst finally in Warsaw. Most of the Germans did not think that the superficial *Gleichschaltung* was a sufficient safeguard for their positions, and therefore a mass-migration into the Party began. All the members of the Legation, from the Councillor down to the last clerk, ardently desired to enrol into the N.S.D.A.P., although, with a few exceptions, they were not at all in sympathy with the Radical aims of Nazi-ism. People became a prey to mass hysteria. I remember how a harmless, unpolitical girl typist wept an entire afternoon because she imagined that she would not be allowed to join the Party owing to the intrigues of a fellow-worker. In vain I tried to console her by pointing out that as she was

a good worker as well as a pure Aryan, she had nothing to fear even if she remained outside the ranks of the Party. Her only answer was a fresh burst of tears ; between her sobs, she managed to inform me that she was sure she would be transferred to Berlin as a punishment—and on the meagre pay one drew there she would be unable to support her parents.

Unfortunately the above-mentioned Party-man was not the only agent in Warsaw who reported on the moral and official life of the journalists and diplomats there. Again and again, we heard, in a roundabout way, of mysterious libellous letters which some obscure middle-man had conveyed anonymously to Party headquarters. In the old days every Jack stuck to his trade, and it was an unwritten law among diplomats and journalists not to meddle with one's colleagues, but to leave it to one's superiors to form a critical judgment as to their merits. All this was to change now. A great number of morally and professionally inferior people saw their golden opportunity ; by dint of intriguing, informing, and tale-bearing they sought to attain what they obviously could not earn by honest work. For them the so-called national rebirth was only an opportunity to grab a job.

If a man occupied a better position than his colleagues, he was fair game. The ignorance, lack of training, and ever vigilant mistrustfulness of the Nazi Party machine was fertile ground, in which these poisonous cabals spread and flourished. If you could find no positive accusation against an importunate rival, you had only to say that he was related, by marriage or otherwise, to members of international Jewry, or—worse still—that he was in thrall to the Jewish spirit. In normal times this would seem a ludicrous accusation, but from the point of view of the orthodox Nazi with his extraordinary mentality, it is the worst thing that can be said of a man. It suffices for anybody suspected of this crime to be dismissed from his post and supplanted by a nationally unobjectionable person.

The National Socialist Party has striven in vain to put an end to this unworthy system of spying and informing, but in spite of its good intentions it could make no headway. The reason for this failure being, that the organization

endows quite incompetent persons with power over a complicated bureaucratic machine with whose working they are unfamiliar. Their very helplessness makes these Party commissars fall an easy prey to inferior intriguers; they cannot distinguish between justified criticism and malignity.

These sordid, underhand intrigues, which were diametrically opposed to my nature and my upbringing, depressed me profoundly, all the more because I found that I myself was not immune from being befouled with the prevalent flood of anonymous libels. As they could find nothing definite with which to accuse me, some more or less plausible inventions had to do the trick. It was said that I was an aristocratic internationalist, a protagonist of Austrian particularism, and notwithstanding my Aryan descent, a highly dangerous *Gesinnungsjud*e (Jew by principles)—in a word, a poisonous viper feeding on the bosom of rejuvenated Germania. Although I realized how ridiculous these accusations were, they did not leave me unmoved. I noticed that the very people whose position would have made them bound to protect me failed to do so out of cowardice. Every non-Nazi had his hands full with protecting his own position, so that he had no time to worry about the fate of his co-workers. The national uplift appeared to be accompanied by an equally rapid moral deterioration.

I decided to take my fate into my own hands. At the end of 1933 I went to Berlin in order to clear matters up as far as it should prove possible. During the months that had elapsed since my last visit in the preceding summer, Berlin had again undergone a complete change. General *Gleichschaltung* was very nearly complete, and National Socialism had even infiltrated into the outward appearance of the city, which had reverted from a metropolis to a provincial town. I must admit that some of the changes that had taken place were definitely for the better—for instance the 'haunts of vice' which had been purged or closed down under the Nazi régime were certainly no loss to humanity. On the other hand, it struck me as redundant and ridiculous when I saw posters in the restaurants proclaiming that the German Frau does not smoke and should not paint her

face. The smart, well-dressed women who had given a *cachet* to Berlin’s West End a year ago had practically disappeared. They were supplanted by girls in B.d.M. (*Bund deutscher Maedchen*) uniforms and women of the unattractive type found in small towns.

In the Ministries and bureaux which I visited, I found integral National Socialists occupying all the key positions. The former supporters of the Weimar democracy, even those who had more or less superficially conformed, were only employed in the capacity of specialists. They were the beasts of burden of the new state, and the Nazis had gaily jumped on to the driver’s seat. It did not seem to matter in the least whether the new masters had any knowledge of the duties they had been entrusted to perform. The decisive factor was not a man’s knowledge, but the length of time he had belonged to the National Socialist Movement.

The Wolff Bureau, which had furnished the German Press with information for wellnigh three generations, was in dissolution. The old directors had disappeared; one of them had left a few months after the revolution, the other, owing to information laid against him by one of his Nazi subordinates, had been imprisoned for some weeks. Although the accusations against him were proved to be entirely unfounded, he was of Jewish descent, and that, apparently, made him an outlaw. He was forced to quit his post.

The chief difference between Germany’s new masters and the old ones was the fact that the former, according to their highly individualistic reading of the Fuehrer principle, made up for their lack of positive knowledge by braggadocio and arrogance. To those whom it affects it may well remain a matter of indifference whether this attitude arises from a genuine sense of superiority or from an over-compensated inferiority complex.

I have always detested the notorious Prussian attitude of the Wilhelminian epoch, which had already once caused Germany’s mental and political isolation; its proletarian complement could not please me any better. You may disagree violently with the political reasoning of an officer in the guards, but that does not mean that you admire

that of an N.C.O. Only too soon I realized that Wilhelminianism and National Socialism were merely two facets, distinguished only by the difference of class, of the identical mental outlook, which, full-steam ahead, was heading for new disaster. Again the admirable energies of the German people were being misdirected on a gigantic scale.

Naturally I did not realize immediately all that the new development in Germany portended, but I felt extremely apprehensive. Nevertheless I decided to look objectively into the matter, and to conquer my instinctive aversion to the aggressive and offensive slogans in use, hoping to discover after all that the prickly husk enclosed the grain of truth which might enable me to represent the Third Reich abroad with a clear conscience.

I was immediately to see a sample of the new spirit when I visited the Wolff Bureau. A sub-editor in the black uniform of the S.S. came up to me and asked abruptly whether we suffered in Warsaw under the atrocity campaign of the Press. I answered truthfully that the Polish newspapers were exceedingly guarded in their reports about Germany ; when we heard anything to the detriment of the new State it was sure to come from Prague. "So—from Prague ! Never mind, we'll get there too in time," sneered my interlocutor, disclosing a row of dazzling gold teeth. Then he tramped away with great energy. This was the kind of tone that dominated all the conversations I was to have with these *petits bourgeois* turned berserk with the intoxication of power. Try as I would, I could never establish contact. Although they spoke German, it was another language to my own.

The same thing happened at the Ministry for Propaganda and at the Party's office for Foreign Affairs. Everywhere the new tone, the deification of figures and power, the terrifying lack of understanding for spiritual values. I was always reminded of a phrase from a modern German play : 'When I hear the word culture I release the catch of my gun.' In the afternoon I called on an old friend who occupied a prominent position in the economic administration. He was a genuine German nationalist, and in the old days he had sympathized wholeheartedly with the

National Socialist Movement. This was due to his temperamental dislike of Republicans, Socialists, and Jews. I found him horrified at the suppression of free intellectual creation and of the Christian ideals. He ended his very pessimistic description with the exclamation: “Who would have thought that we could end in this spiritual quagmire?”

I spent the evening with a friend of my youth who was now a member of the S.A. and had belonged to the Movement for many years. He was one of those good fellows who love fighting for its own sake, so that the fighting spirit of Nazidom exercised an irresistible fascination for him. Over a bottle of hock he described his adventures during the first months after the revolution; how he and his henchmen had routed out the Communist leaders during the night from their lairs in the East End of Berlin and taken them to the nearest Party centre. They were not taken without resistance, and some of them had put up a desperate fight. Nevertheless, he and his men succeeded in a few weeks in accomplishing their task and purging the quarter assigned to them, which was thoroughly infected with Bolshevism. He admitted that there had been some unpleasant scenes at the Party centre, because many of his men had old scores of their own to settle with the prisoners, which they did by beating them unmercifully. Even to-day, more than six months afterwards, he could not forget the screams of a tall, hefty Communist leader, a certain S——. They were beating him on the head with sticks and he cried unceasingly: “Kill me, kill me! Only don’t beat me any more!” My informant had finally sought refuge in another room, because he could not bear the revolting scene. S—— died the next day of meningitis.

I was horror-struck; these savage brutalities were exactly like those we had heard about through the so-called atrocity propaganda. I asked my friend why he had not stopped his men. He shrugged his shoulders with a helpless gesture. The hatred which had arisen, during the civil strife in the days of Bruening and Papen, between S.A. men and Reds was so terrible, he explained, that it could only be quenched by blood. He was sure that the Communists would have behaved much worse in a similar case, and besides, his men

would not have obeyed him, even if he had forbidden them to beat their adversaries. Moreover, this rough-and-ready justice was in accordance with the working of the prevalent system. The accuracy of this last argument struck me so forcibly that I remained a rather silent and inattentive host during the remainder of the evening. My friend gulped down several glasses of wine in rapid succession, probably hoping to wash down the bad taste that his reminiscences must have occasioned.

Next day I visited a barrister of the Berlin Kammergericht, who was a highly cultivated man and had made a great name for himself in the legal and in the social world. He was one of those fairly rare German intellectuals of Jewish descent who were devout Christians and stood on the firm ground of an indestructible faith. We were delighted to meet again, and without thinking I greeted him with the stereotyped inquiry: "How are you?"

"In a bad way," he replied. "Not a day goes by without bringing disastrous news. Now we can say again, as we did in the worst days after the War: How splendid things were a fortnight ago!"

"Don't be such a Jonah. You will see, everything will be smoothed out and arranged," I said, attempting to cheer him up, though rather against my own convictions.

"No, I don't believe they ever will be. We Christians and intellectuals have lost the day in Germany. The men who rule to-day are chauffeurs, and gangsters with machine-guns. Maybe we have not deserved a better fate. Think of those German would-be intellectuals who were so clever they could hear the grass grow—how they were continually prophesying things that didn't happen, how they criticized everything and never mustered the courage and the energy to act. To-day Germany is ruled by Adolf Hitler and his tough guys. Do you remember everything the know-alls told us about Hitler and his primitive unworldliness—what utter bilge it was! The man is supremely cunning. It is a stroke of genius how he draws the ultimate consequences from democracy and propagates his ideology like a mass-product, with the methods of an American firm boosting some new razor-blade or tooth-paste. He calls himself the

drummer, perhaps he does not even know how right he is. Do you remember how the Leftist Press used to maintain that there could not be anything behind this Hitler with his ordinary, expressionless face—at the best a popular demagogue? How ridiculous all that sounds to-day. Believe me, a man who was capable of destroying a political adversary with such brilliant cleverness as Hitler, when he downed the timid Social Democrat Otto Wels at the Kroll Opera, at the opening session of the Reichstag, would have made his mark as a politician under any circumstances. In a firmly established democracy Adolf Hitler would have become a great Parliamentarian. Look at the masterly way in which he rid himself of Hugenberg, Seldte, and all those others who once held his stirrup—think of the supreme cleverness with which he plays off his young men one against the other—only a fool can doubt for one moment that Hitler overtops all the others by several lengths. Besides, there is a pure flame burning in him somewhere. His idea of overcoming class-differences through national unity is surely great, and he is really sincere about it. I admit that he desecrates his aim, like many other mystics and fanatics, by the use of force. He reminds me of that tragic figure in history, John of Leyden, the leader of the Anabaptists of Muenster, whom Meyerbeer made into the hero of an opera. I think Hitler is a man of the same type, only with the difference that the field of his experiment is not a little town in Westphalia, but the whole of Germany. To-day—because he cannot do anything else—he is turning Germany into a barrack.”

Just as my friend had uttered these words, we heard the rhythmic tread of marching men. We looked out of the window and saw a division of Hitler Jugend marching past, stepping in time to the rum-ti-tum of a drum which a small boy was beating with all his might.

“Look at those faces, dear Count—how happy these boys are that they are allowed to march again. I don’t know how it is with you in Austria. But believe me,” and he made a sweeping gesture, “this form of government fits the half-German, half-Wendo-Borussian people east of the Elbe, who are still hankering back to the Frederickian corporal’s truncheon, like a glove. Germans like ourselves,

who are not content with carrying a humanistic ideal in our hearts, but want to see it realized, are not in our right place for the time being. This Third Reich, even if we do not end in a concentration-camp, must needs be a hopeless prison for us."

With that he broke off; sunk in bitter meditation, he gazed down at the marching boys. Then he walked with dragging steps to his desk, sat down, and resting his head on his hands, he looked at me fixedly and suddenly said in the purest Berlin dialect: "It's a fact, I'd like to make a get-away."

Fate was to decide otherwise. He never left Germany again, for he died of a disease of long standing a few months later.

My next visit was to the Foreign Office. I was to meet a friend there and then go out to lunch with him at Kempinski's on the Kurfuerstendamm. While we were driving there, he told me that he had also invited a young secretary of a German Legation, who was staying in Berlin for a couple of days before going to his new post. He was, so my friend told me, a bright, intelligent young man with whom one could talk sense.

When we got to the restaurant we found the Secretary already waiting for us. He was a tall fellow with a large head and small, furtive eyes; to judge by his manners and his speech a typical product of the *Junker* education, smoothed down by the Foreign Office. We chose a quiet table standing slightly apart, and our host devoted himself to the delicate task of choosing our menu and wine from Kempinski's endless list. When a greenish Saar-wine was shimmering in our glasses and we were preparing to enjoy a deliciously cooked eel, the hitherto casual conversation took a serious turn, and we began to discuss the question which was so important to all of us: whether a non-Nazi was justified in representing his country abroad.

I said that this was becoming increasingly difficult from day to day. The outward *Gleichschaltung* was no longer enough, as Germany was rapidly becoming a real Party State. She was now experiencing what Italy had experienced during the first years after the March on Rome—but with the difference that the National Socialist revolution was doing

away with democracy much more rapidly and thoroughly than Fascism had done. In the whole of Germany there was no common meeting-ground, no last refuge for liberalism, like the Aventin. Also Germany was the only Fascist State where the ruling party pushed its unbounded totalitarian demands so far as to discredit the teaching of Christ and his apostles. Except for Soviet Russia and Mexico there was no white country but Germany where it would have been possible to nominate a man with such a fanatical hatred of Christianity as Artur Rosenberg to be overseer of education and orthodox ideology. What was to become of Germany's youth? The half- or three-quarter-educated German schoolmaster who had formerly looked upon Haeckel's philosophy as the last word in wisdom, would naturally become a willing apostle of the new materialistic creed. But the youth of to-day represented the people of to-morrow—the people which Hitler was to lead to new greatness.

Would he succeed? Was this not again an instance of the tragic error between power and greatness? No true greatness without humility, without the education of the heart. This remained as true for nations as it was for individuals. A nation without humility must become an unmanageable, dangerous rabble, a pack of wolves. And education of the heart? A great Frenchman once said: ‘*Les grandes pensées viennent du cœur.*’ But how were great thoughts to be conceived, if the heart was to become merely a muscle regulating the circulation of the gun-carrying beast of the future?

I paused and drew a deep breath. My companions were listening attentively, so I continued: “If I am right with all I have said, we can no longer represent Germany abroad without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost. We must leave the job to those who believe in the tenets of National Socialism. As a true German at heart I deny the identity of National Socialism and Germanism which the ruling party claims, but nevertheless I feel that the Germany of to-day should employ only convinced National Socialists in foreign missions. Everything else can only lead to ambiguities that do no good to anybody—and lead nowhere in the long run.”

"My dear Huyn," said our host, "I must say I think you are exaggerating, although I agree with you that National Socialism in its present form can lead to no good end. But what you ask is that the entire German representation abroad be given over to the Nazis. I cannot possibly subscribe to that. After all, Germany remains Germany, whatever government it happens to have. Just picture to yourself what a mess the Nazis would make of things if they were allowed to do what they like without any interference. Don't forget how many disastrous blunders people of our background and education might avert if we remain in office. We must keep to the old military maxim, which, as far as I know, was formulated in your home-country: Shut your mouth and keep marching."

"What you say sounds well, and almost convincing," I replied, "nevertheless I am afraid you are wrong. If you were employed in the Ministry for Statistics or Transport, you would naturally be quite justified—questions of regime have no bearing on them. But if you are a German diplomat abroad, you become a standard-bearer of the system. The man who carries the flag must do it wholeheartedly and without inner reservations. So much for the ethical side of the question. I even have doubts whether the ideas you advocate could be practically carried out for any length of time. Suppose the Nazi regime is maintained for a number of years, don't you see that you could not continue to play this double role without going to pieces inwardly and giving yourself away? If you look back at this present year, 1933, you must realize how the National Socialist pressure has increased in every department of life. This will continue, for the logic of the system demands it. National Socialism will, however, never be strong enough to indulge in the luxury of enclosing reservations for Liberals and democrats. Or do you think the Foreign Office will have a reservation for *Deutschnationale* and the adherents of the German Peoples' Party, like the reservations the United States have created in order to preserve their Indians? If you think so, you are mistaken. You will get under the wheels, and then you will have scant opportunity to avert disastrous blunders. You will jump to attention and do as you are told, no

matter whether it fits in with your principles and your philosophy or not. Or, to put it in the Nazi Party jargon, the days of the democratic fool's license are over. Now we are not supposed to think, but to obey. The Fuehrer does the thinking and gives the orders. We others are his soldiers, and we have not only to give up our private principles, but our private lives as well."

"But you speak like a hundred per cent Nazi!" our host exclaimed in horror. "It would be terrible if you were right. Then we can say that this country has robbed us of everything during the last twenty years: in the War of our youth, in the inflation of our money—and now it would take the last thing we possess: the liberty to think and to form opinions of our own."

"You are mistaken," I replied. "The power of the State does not extend quite so far. The régime attempts with every means at its disposal to instil certain ideas in your mind, but it will never be within its power to stop you from thinking and rejecting them inwardly. But what the State can and will do is to knock you flat if you should dare to give expression to your divergent opinions. So, although you are a German politician—for you are that in spite of the fact that you are an official—you will have no opportunity of putting your ideas into practise; those ideas which are your profound convictions. Unless, of course, you try to become a member of the Party and seek to propagate them within the circumscribed limits of the N.S.D.A.P. The other alternative would be for you to resign from the service and join the Communists, socialists, and the few remaining democrats in the subterranean movement against the ruling party. Everything else is a fallacy, at the best a policy of weakness. As I know you, you have neither liking nor aptitude for either of these methods, so the best thing you can do is to give up your career and plant cabbages at home. I know it does not bring in much, nor is it as amusing as the varied life of a diplomat, but at least you will have peace of mind; and, in my opinion, no sacrifice is too great for that. You will win more than you lose."

The young Secretary had not joined in our talk, except for a few brief remarks. But to judge by his expression, the conversation appeared to interest him profoundly. When

I had finished speaking and our host was sitting in thoughtful silence, he began :

“ If you allow me to say so, the conversation has taken an almost personal turn, and you have discussed with amazing frankness, matters which are better left alone. In the end, every one of us has to decide these questions for himself. But as we are now talking about this delicate subject, I would like to tell you openly how I think about it.

“ Politically I must agree with Count Huyn ; I believe, as he does, that National Socialism will fill and dominate our entire lives. But I arrive at different conclusions from him, because I think that it is not only hopeless but disastrous to swim against the stream. At the best it leads to putting oneself on the shelf, at the worst to utter ruin. We must accept things as they are, and in our own interest, we must do as the others do, and forget our personal opinions. This is our duty, both as Germans, and as officials. *A man who is incapable of standing for actions and ideas which he regrets and even abhors, as though they coincided with his inmost convictions, should not be a German diplomat to-day.* I personally have decided to act in this manner, and I can assure you—it can be done ! After all, every man must consider himself first, to-day more than ever, and nobody will thank us if we ruin ourselves and our families because of exaggerated moral scruples. Maxims like ‘ Obey God rather than your neighbour ’ are all very well to read in school—but in real life they don’t lead anywhere.

“ Fundamentally, intellectual liberty means as much to me as it does to you, and I have not got a passion for concentration-camps ; although I don’t think much of the fools who get themselves locked up because they must air their convictions, instead of having recourse to a white lie or two. On the whole, the importance of intellectual liberty and the right to express one’s opinion is vastly exaggerated. It is a problem of yester-year, which may have excited Schiller and his contemporaries, but has really no bearing on us. It is our job to build up a strong and mighty Germany that can break the fetters of Versailles. You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs—and we should not allow a few little blemishes to detract our atten-

tion from the truly great deeds which are being performed in Germany.”

I did not deem it necessary to argue or even to continue the conversation ; it seemed impossible to bridge the chasm between my ideas and these cynical, opportunistic theories which were barely concealed by his cheap moralizing. So I was glad when our host, sensing that the party could no longer be drawn out in the circumstances, gave the signal for our departure. We said good-bye to the promising young man and walked back to the Foreign Office together. The back garden gate was open for once, so we walked round for a little while in the fine grounds. On the right was the President’s garden, on the left that of the *Reichskanzlei*—here Hindenburg, there Hitler. My friend suddenly stopped short and pointed to the wall that divided the garden of the Foreign Office from that of the *Reichskanzlei* and said : “ Look at the low part of the wall—that has made history.” I laughed incredulously.

“ No, I am not joking,” he said, “ Papen lived here during the Schleicher era, and the old gentleman stayed at the *Reichskanzlei* while his house was being done up. Papen preferred not to use the front door, because Schleicher had a young man in his pay who would have immediately reported to his employer that Papen was visiting Hindenburg. So Papen, who is still in good condition, climbed the garden wall and was able to arrange Hitler’s chancellorship at his secret meetings unobserved by his former friend Schleicher.”

When I travelled back to Warsaw that very night by my usual train, I could not sleep, and I spent the night thinking over impressions I had received in Berlin. The many people I had met passed again before my mind. I compared their divergent ideas and opinions, and vainly I tried to form this chaotic tangle into some sort of pattern. Again and again I had to think of what the young Secretary with whom I had lunched at Kempinski’s had said : that only the man who can disavow his opinions by his acts should represent Germany abroad. Much as I had disliked this young man, much as I despised his cheap opportunism, I had to admit to myself that on that question he was absolutely right. I knew myself well enough to realize that

I was temperamentally unfitted to perform these feats of mental acrobatics.

What was I to do? It was out of the question for me to turn Nazi, for, although I am a German at heart, I felt that the radical chauvinism preached by National Socialism was a falling away from the German ideal, which should be a European, a human ideal. There was only one way out of the dilemma: to throw up my post and go.

When I arrived in Warsaw the next morning, I was driven through the snow-covered streets of the town in a sleigh; many thousands of fir trees, heralding the approach of Christmas, had already been brought in by the peasants of the neighbourhood and lined the great squares. I knew that this would be my last Christmas in Warsaw.

On June 30 1934 there was a farewell dinner-party at the German Legation. I had sat through many of these farewell dinners, with their choice wines and their obligatory speeches—but this one was different. It was my own farewell party. I had carried out my intentions, and on 1 July I was quitting the German Service for good. The Minister, Herr von Moltke, as well as other members of the Service, had done their best to persuade me to change my mind. I knew all they had to tell me as well as they did: that it would not be easy to build up a new career at the age of forty—but considerations such as these, justified though they were from a material point of view, could not alter my decision. I wanted to fulfil my own life, no matter how steep and difficult the way might prove.

The guests at the dinner were a variegated crowd. In sweet harmony, members of the German Legation, German journalists, Nazis, democrats, and Jews sat side by side. The Nuremberg laws had not yet been passed and such a combination was still—though only just—possible.

There is always a displeasing and somewhat forced atmosphere at a farewell party. Mine was destined to stand out against a sinister and *macabre* background—owing to the historical events that took place on that day. Just as we were sitting down to table, we heard a special broadcast on the wireless, announcing the first news of a mysterious revolt of the S.A., and the shooting of Adolf Hitler's intimate friend, Reichsminister Roehm. None of us had as yet any

inkling as to the real significance of the bloody events in Germany, but the first impression was depressing and humiliating. During the dinner the wireless remained switched on in the next room, and we all waited tensely for further news.

Then Herr von Moltke rose and began to speak in his warm, pleasant voice about my work at the Legation. Every word of his long and friendly speech was actuated by kindness and sympathy, and sincere regret at losing me. When he had finished I rose to thank him. I was acutely aware of the grave importance of the moment, and I spoke strongly, though with carefully chosen words, of everything I had at heart. I spoke of Germany and Poland, of our ancient German culture, which now was menaced by a vertical migration of the peoples. I mentioned that phrase of Richard Wagner's which has meant so much more to me than many of his pompous operas: "To be German means to do a thing for its own sake." This maxim, I said, had been the ruling motive of my activities at this Legation, and whoever meditated on the meaning of these words must understand why I felt bound to depart from this community, for whom I now felt a sincere affection.

I had barely emptied my glass when we heard the voice of the Berlin announcer and hastened back to the wireless. In hard, apparently unmoved tones, he read out a long list of names of the men who had been shot. An expression of fear and horror spread over the faces of the listeners standing round. Next to me a man murmured under his breath: "But this is not Germany, it's Macedonia." A friend leant over and whispered into my ear: "You see, they're already beginning to kill each other off. You may be coming back to us in a few weeks' time."

I shook my head and went to get myself some more brandy, so as to be prepared in case worse was to come. Just as I was filling my glass a young man came lurching up to me, flushed with wine; a person I had never liked, because he was overbearing and unintelligent. Gesticulating wildly with a glass of whisky in his hand, he exclaimed: "What do you say to this grand deed of the Fuehrer's? Isn't it wonderful, simply wonderful?"

I thought to myself that to-day he was the only one to

think it wonderful, because he was the stupidest person there—to-morrow they would all think so, because they are not allowed to think differently. Poor prisoners ! But I was going home to-morrow to Austria, a free country as yet, and leaving my broken fetters behind.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

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### RETURN TO AUSTRIA

WHEN I RETURNED TO Austria in the spring of 1934 I was confronted with a situation fraught with danger and uncertainty. The danger lay in the fact that the State, which had barely recovered from the Socialist rising in February, was now being bombarded by the big guns of Nazi propaganda, and the brittle foundations of Chancellor Dollfuss' regime appeared to be veiled by a dense fog of uncertainty.

I had thought that it would be easy for me, as an Austrian born, who had been in politics for years, to understand the new conditions, all the more so as, during the twelve years of my absence, I had visited Austria more than once every year and had never lost touch with Austrian politicians. I found that I was thoroughly mistaken, and I soon realized that I had never found so complicated and confused a situation in any country I had visited. Several experienced political observers have told me since that Austria was the most 'difficult' country they had met. This explains the wide divergence of opinions on Dollfuss-Austria which appeared in the international Press between 1933 and 1938. I quote some outstanding phrases from memory: 'The corporate democracy of Austria,' 'The clerical-fascist tyranny in Austria,' 'the Catholic Church rules Austria,' 'Dollfuss, the Saviour of German culture from brown (i.e. Nazi) barbarism,' 'Dollfuss, Hitler's incumbent and best pupil,' etc. There was some justification for each of these categorical judgments; the blurred outlines of the Austrian régime differed according to the angle from which

one looked at them. If we insist on finding a formula that would cover this peculiar régime, we might call it a dictatorship, mitigated by half-measures.

One point of difference between the dictatorship in Austria and that in other States was apparent. Austria's dictatorship was not due to a *coup d'état* nor to the urge of a strong popular movement, but simply to the fact that authoritarian forms of government were, so to say, in the air. The typically Austrian desire to give everybody what they wanted and to attempt compromises even where they are impossible, led to the inception of the monstrous corporate State, which was meant to be a cross between Parliamentary democracy and Fascism. From the very beginning it was a hopeless undertaking.

A gifted Austrian, the former *Sektionschef* of the War Ministry, Herr Hecht, compiled a secret memorandum on the inner conditions of Austria in 1933 ; this exhibits not only the unusual clear-sightedness, but also the prophetic gifts of its author. He says that Austria's authoritarian Government was developed from a Parliamentary Government which finally lost its Parliamentary foundations. The Government should not remain under the delusion that it owed its existence to a movement of the masses. In spite of the Patriotic Front, the Government's authority did not rest on a universal mandate, but merely on its own will to exercise the power it possessed to the utmost. Yet even this material power of the authoritarian Government was limited, as it consisted merely in its power over the Army, the police, and the administration, as well as in the power of making laws based on emergency decrees. However anti-Communist or anti-democratic the Government might be, however convinced of the necessity for authoritarian measures, the mere possession of power and the will to power must not be confused with true authority. True authority had to some extent its roots in the mystical belief of the people in a happier future, and in those who were called to bring it to pass. The authority of the National Socialist and the Fascist regime were not only based on the brute force of the State, and the will to use it without mercy, but on the construction of these States and the fact that a popular movement had called them into being. A govern-

ment of authority was not possible without the inner support of the masses ; only a government of might. The fact that the Austrian Government had no Parliamentary foundations, and had turned its back on democracy, did not make it into a true authoritarian government possessed of a popular mandate.

Hecht went on to point out very rightly, that no State could exist in the long run without a political organization of its people. Austria was unfortunately in that position. The masses were flocking towards National Socialism because they were not bound by any other form of organization, and also because they were politically discontented. The Government should make it their first task to provide the masses with a new form of organization. This was a condition on which the future existence of the Government, perhaps the whole future of Austria herself, depended ; for, if the Austrian Government could not transform itself from a government of might into one of authority, it would be incapable of coping with further developments and was doomed to fall, notwithstanding its will to power.

It would be impossible to describe the political conditions that prevailed in Austria during the Dollfuss régime more clearly, correctly and frankly than this Austrian official has done. Like so many others he took his own life when Hitler marched into Austria in March 1938.

The Governments of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg tried in vain to carry out Hecht's advice and to provide the people with a political organization, and the regime with meaning and justification. Unfortunately, they went about the task in the wrong way. With the intention of showing the people that a new authoritarian epoch had dawned in Austria, Dollfuss, and later Schuschnigg, began by breaking the containers of the old political organizations without having provided new vessels to hold their contents. The corporate State, which according to Dollfuss was to realize the principles of the Papal Encyclical '*quadragesimo anno*,' was doomed to failure from its very inception. Hecht also pointed out in 1933 that the corporate State did not represent any actual idea of the people and was really nothing but an empty word, the antithesis of the deposed Parliament and the moribund forms of the democratic system.

When the *Gleichschaltung* swept over Germany all parties and political organizations were disbanded, in order to press all the liberated political forces into the service of the National Socialist Party. But when Dollfuss or Schuschnigg disbanded political organizations in Austria, the majority of the freed masses did not stream into their camp, but into that of their political opponents—the Nazis. It was ‘*travail pour le roi de Prusse*,’ in the literal meaning of the phrase.

When it became more and more apparent that all attempts at reviving the corporate State and the Patriotic Front were hopeless, new measures were sought in order to infuse fresh blood into the anæmic Government. Christian Socialist politicians with limited imaginations like Dollfuss and Schuschnigg could not be expected to find other methods for this vivification of the State than Catholicism and a revival of the Habsburg tradition. Now the average Austrian is a good Christian and Catholic, but he has a decided aversion against clericalism and priestly rule. It cannot be denied that the régime overstepped the limits of political good sense, and even of good taste, in its stressing of the Christian Catholic character of the State. Religion ceased to be a private matter for the individual, as it had been in the strongly Catholic Austria of the Habsburgs, for to be a practising Catholic now became a condition for a successful career within the State. The clock was put back to the days before 1848. Even devout Catholics may have shaken their heads when they read, in the autumn of 1934, how the new constitution for the province of Lower Austria, began with an invocation of that country’s patron saint, St. Leopold. He was implored “to pray Almighty God to bless the country of Lower Austria and its inhabitants.” It was this one-sided Catholic course, united with the marked preference shown to former members of the Catholic Students Union to which both Dollfuss and Schuschnigg belonged, that did a great deal towards making politically indifferent Austrians, even if they were good Christians, receptive to Nazi propaganda.

This propaganda, spread in whispers by the National Socialists, very cleverly made use of the resentment that had been aroused by exaggerated clericalism. As in Austria, owing to atavistic and historical conceptions, anti-clericalism

is thought to be identical with liberalism, many representatives of the half or three-quarter educated classes looked upon National Socialism as a liberation. They would say : 'Hitler rules in the name of the people, but Schuschnigg tyrannizes us in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.' It is not yet possible to estimate the extent of the damage which this unfortunate combination of religion and regime wrought in the mentality of the Austrian people. The numbers that have left the Catholic Church since March 1938, and the wavering attitude of Austria's bishops towards the National Socialist Government, are unmistakable symptoms of the serious crisis which Christianity is now undergoing in Austria.

The other attempt of the Austrian politicians of the former régime to reinforce the State by reviving the old Austrian loyalties and carrying on propaganda for the House of Habsburg, was nearly as unfortunate. Every intelligent politician who had any knowledge of Austria and the Austrian people had to realize that such a propaganda could only appeal to people of over forty. It is sheer madness to try and build up a State on the retrospective sentimentality of the older generation. And for the majority of the youth of Austria the monarchy represents merely a historical past which came to an inglorious end with the Great War. In view of the international situation it was wellnigh impossible to awaken a Greater-Austrian enthusiasm for a new Danubian monarchy under Austria's leadership. There can hardly have been a single young German-Austrian who dreamt of drawing his sword in order to win back the old provinces for the House of Habsburg. Yet the Habsburg ideology is essentially greater-Austrian and not lesser-Austrian, super-national and not national, and so it could not make headway in a national State, the second German State of Schuschnigg. Therefore the legitimist propaganda appealed only to maturer noblemen and officials, former officers and conservative Jews, who looked upon the solution of a Habsburg restoration as a safeguard against National Socialism. Yet even though the number of the adherents of a restoration increased considerably during the last years of Austria's existence, it would be quite wrong to speak of a popular legitimist movement.

The Dollfuss-Schuschnigg régime not only endeavoured to strengthen the Habsburg loyalties, it also attempted to give the State the outward appearance of the defunct Habsburg monarchy, and to revive the old 'imperial and royal' feelings. By reintroducing the old Austrian uniforms, and cultivating the old Austrian traditions in every way, they tried to evoke the illusion that the good old times had come back again—the times when the roll cost two *kreuzer* and the old Emperor resided at Schoenbrunn. This effort to provide Austria with a 'yellow and black' (the Habsburg colours) façade was doomed to complete failure, for the economical and political contrasts were too great to allow the desired illusion to be created. The effect was *macabre*, spectral, and uninspiring, when a few venerable archdukes appeared at a festivity, clad in uniforms (which smelt of moth-balls) of a realm that no longer existed, and were followed by a handful of good citizens in similar costumes, who represented not a great army, but the small contingent of the federal troops which could not arouse anybody's enthusiasm. Austria was sick, grievously sick, and sick men have need of a more potent medicine than this weak and warmed-up broth. You cannot make a dilapidated ship that has sprung a leak, seaworthy again by merely re-painting the hull. Characteristically, it was an Austrian and not even an antagonist of the régime—who coined the bitter phrase that Austria was trying to act the Hollywood version of itself.

Where, then, was Austria to be found? Perhaps in the *Heimwehr*, the only genuine popular movement, beside Viennese Socialism, of post-War Austria? But, during the dictatorship of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg, the *Heimwehr*, which succeeded in keeping afloat for a number of years, only thanks to Italian subsidies had long since passed the peak of its popularity. Disagreements between the leaders, and the general vagueness of its political aims had weakened this movement, which was originally intended as the rallying ground for all non-Communist forces of Austria. With the political decline of the Viennese Socialists, which began on 15 July 1927 with the revolt at the *Justizpalast* and was consummated in February 1934, the *Heimwehr* movement lost both its opponent, and its justification.

The attempt of the *Heimwehr* leader Steidle and later of his successor, Prince Starhemberg, to give the movement a new meaning by providing it with an authoritarian aim failed; not so much because of the rival Nazi movement, but owing to Schuschnigg's jealousy, because he did not want to share the power with Starhemberg. When Schuschnigg won one of his prematurely admired Pyrrhic victories in May 1936 and finally pushed Starhemberg out of the Government and disbanded the *Heimwehr*, he was yet again furthering Adolf Hitler's interests. It was not surprising that the annoyed and bitterly disappointed adherents of the *Heimwehr* should provide an excellent audience for National Socialist propaganda, whose disseminators were continually on the look-out for their opponents' weak spots.

And yet, amid all this confusion of movements and counter-movements, the heart of the old Austria was still beating, of the Austria, which was essentially liberal and long-suffering, and where the opponent was always allowed to say his say—if only because Austrians, born sceptics that they are, have never attached too much importance to their own opinion. This typical Austrian attitude of *laissez-faire* is the result of centuries of domination by the German-Austrian race over the motley race mixture of the Danube basin. It is a mixture of ancient statesmanlike wisdom with weakness, of outwardly displayed pessimism with inner optimism. For when an Austrian says: "Don't worry, it will go wrong anyway!" he really believes that all will come right in the end. This somewhat complicated mental attitude, which has so often been misunderstood outside Austria, is certainly not heroic, and therefore it does not coincide with the aims of the modern nation-tamers with their whips and revolver shots. The Austrian does not want to lead the life of a lion, but simply that of a human being. Thus he has no real understanding of the declaration made by Herr von Papen as Adolf Hitler's Vice-Chancellor, "that the true German should not die in his bed." All the convictions and ideas slumbering in the soul of the Austrian go to form the raw material not only for a true democracy, but also for the ideal of Europe, of a European who wishes to live in peace and amity with states and peoples of other languages and ideas. Thus we

might have hoped that this real Austria would awaken to new life—if it succeeded in weathering the National Socialist storm. This hidden, eternal Austria was able to find free expression in the wide realms of intellectual life even under the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg régime, for the Austrian dictatorship had the advantage over the National Socialist and the Bolshevik régimes of not interfering with art and science. Critics might contend that the Austrian régime was too weak to bring to realization all its evil totalitarian intentions. But the ultimate effect was the same, and the fact remains that the Austria of that period was not infected by the disease of idolizing the Nation and the State. We could therefore still hope that it would, at least in art and science, hand down the torch which the Third Reich had extinguished, to future generations of Germans.

This was the impression I received on my return to Austria. It was not inspiring, nor was it hopeful, but compared with the intellectual barracks which Adolf Hitler had erected in Germany, Austria appeared as Liberty Hall. Conditions were not ideal—but they represented the lesser evil. For everyone who had the eternal values of German culture at heart it was apparent that even this mutilated and ailing Austria was still worth preserving and defending, at any rate while Nazi dictatorship was stifling every trace of cultural life in Germany. Accordingly, I looked upon the preservation of Austria as an aim with a time-limit. I was actuated by principles resembling those of the Pan-German-Austrian bishop who prayed God to bring the National Socialist experiment to a happy conclusion in Germany—but to save Austria from it! For in my heart of hearts, I remained convinced that the only lasting and natural solution of the problem was the Pan-German one.

Even when I was on the point of leaving Warsaw I retained no illusions and realized that the fight for Austria was bound to be a losing one. I remember telling some of my friends at the end of February 1934 that I gave Austria two more years. My observations in Austria itself failed to render me more optimistic. None the less I was firmly resolved to place myself at the disposal of the Austrian regime and stick to any post I might be given to the end—even though it might be a forlorn hope. I informed the Austrian

authorities of my intention, and at the suggestion of the chief of the Press Department, Herr Ludwig, Chancellor Dollfuss created the post of Press Attaché to the Austrian Legation in London for me. Thus it came about that I returned in the autumn of 1934, after an interruption of twelve years, to the grey house on the Ballhausplatz, in order to prepare myself during a few weeks for my mission in London.

At the end of October of the same year I assumed my duties in London, which set me a similar task, but in a new country and for another government, to the one I had followed at the German Legation in Warsaw. A strange career—to begin in the service of Austria, go over to that of Germany and return to Austria ; yet it was no stranger than what had happened in Europe during these years, and it was justified by my principles and my reactions to changing events. In spite of the similarity of my former and my present positions, what a difference there was ! In Warsaw I had been the representative of a Great Power, with important interests in Eastern Europe to defend, and I was face to face with a newly-risen medium Power. Even in the days of the Weimar Republic the voice of Germany was always listened to in Warsaw, not only because of Germany's moral prestige and the strong German minority in Poland, but because Warsaw was always aware of the bizarre possibility of Russo-German co-operation. In London I was confronted by a World Power, while at my back I had only a small State in a precarious position, continually threatened from within and from without. Its only asset was a great name. Certainly the chief of the Legation, Baron Georg von Franckenstein, had succeeded with great diplomatic skill in giving the Austrian mission a position in accordance with the traditions of the Austrian ambassadors who had resided in the same house in Belgrave Square before the War. Baron Franckenstein achieved this not so much in his capacity as the emissary of the feeble and ephemeral Governments of Austria, but as the representative of that Austria which is not bound by national and political frontiers, and performs her greatest deeds in the eternal realms of intellect and art. He was filled with the noble spirit of the true patron of the arts, and he shirked no amount of work and difficulties in

order to help musicians, artists, and authors. The number of artists who owe their present fame and position to his generous help is legion. His musical soirées and receptions which became famous in London, were never mere social events, but were always given for some political, artistic, or charitable purpose. Naturally, a man with Franckenstein's marked personality and high sense of duty never allowed an opportunity to escape him in order to awaken understanding and sympathies for Austria's especial mission, by speaking at meetings, receptions, and banquets. He was an ambassador of Austrian culture in the finest sense of the word.

It was not quite easy for me to effect the change from the purely political atmosphere of the German Legation in Warsaw to the more social one of the Austrian Legation in Belgrave Square. By inclination I am a politician first, although I am aware of the value of cultural and tourist propaganda which was always impressed on the legations by Vienna. But it seemed to me to be more important to give the decrepit building of the Austrian State a firm foundation, both inwardly and outwardly. This could not be done by decorating the façade of the crumbling old house with flags and hanging the walls of barely inhabitable rooms with old masters. With all respect to Austria's culture—it seemed to me that our foreign policy must pursue other aims than the commercialization of a sentimental '*respect des ruines*.'

Baron Franckenstein was fully alive to the fact that the real task of his mission lay in awakening such an interest on the part of Great Britain in Austria as would be equivalent to a guarantee of the latter's independence. Nevertheless, Vienna's politicians never attained more in Paris and London than the very academic declaration of 17 February 1934, whereby the representatives of the Western Powers and Italy recognized the necessity of preserving Austria's independence and integrity. Never a word of guarantee; for England did not wish to increase her commitments on the Continent, partly for traditional reasons, and also in view of the opposition of important sections of public opinion. France, where the value of Austria as a safeguard against the advance of National Socialism into the Danube region was

more fully recognized, relied on the Italian bayonets guarding the Brenner. Thus the chief responsibility for defending Austria's independence fell to Italy. Even long after the collapse of the Stresa front, and even after the conquest of Abyssinia and the creation of the Rome-Berlin axis, the belief was held in French and British Government circles that Italy would have the will and the power to protect Austria against National Socialist aggression.

It should have been the first task of the Viennese Foreign Office to enlighten London and Paris and point out the increasing weakness of Italy's position in the Danube basin. But the responsible people in Vienna hid their heads in the sand, and put their trust in Mussolini. If those who realized the hopeless weakness of Austria's foreign position gave them advice and information, they would smile the superior smile of those who know better. The failure of Austria's foreign policy was caused by the mistaken organization of the entire system. It began with the fact that those who were responsible for Austria's foreign policy were unfitted for the task. Schuschnigg was assuredly a good and brave man, but he possessed neither the imagination nor the experience necessary to deal with foreign affairs. His political horizon hardly transcended that of a clever provincial lawyer. Besides, he lacked one of the most important qualities of a statesman—knowledge of his fellow-men. Surrounded by a small number of co-workers, some of medium intelligence and some wholly equivocal, he led a secluded official's life remote from the world in the fastness of the Ministry. It would probably have been easier for an average Austrian who did not belong to the inner circle of the Chancellor's advisers to go to Moscow and be received by Stalin in the Kremlin than to penetrate into Schuschnigg's presence.

The two oracles on foreign policy whose opinions alone were listened to by Schuschnigg were his friend, the later Secretary of State, Guido Schmidt, and the chief of the political section of the Foreign Office, Herr von Hornbostel. These two men differed in many respects, but they had one failing in common. They belonged to the type of foreign politician who, like junior reporters, actually hear the grass grow. It was quite impossible to inform them of anything, as they always knew better. Hornbostel was by far the

more talented of the two. He was an ardent Austrian patriot, and his foreign political deductions were very clever—with penetration and convincing logic he would always declare that which he wished to believe to be true. In that respect he resembled Holstein, but with a certain admixture of Austrian light-heartedness.

Guido Schmidt's personality was even more complex. He had risen from the lower middle classes, and was consumed by ambition. As a foreign politician he was the typical opportunist, who attempted to master events by small stratagems.

These heavenly twins of Austria's foreign policy could brook no divergent opinion, let alone a criticism. This attitude, which was inherent in their character, was only rendered possible by a system which stifled public opinion and thus led to the pashadom of small dignitaries, who lost all sense of proportion and suffered from the mental complaint known as 'mistaking one's own condition.' The dream-world of political 'wish-fulfilments' in which these petty tyrants had their being, took on a semblance of reality through the cheap effusions about the immortal achievements of the system, which could always find a place in the Vienna Press. This was further aggravated by the fact that they were surrounded by the small fry of officials, ever hoping for advancement and therefore ready to break into enthusiastic applause at the slightest provocation.

In the political department of the Chancellery there reigned, side by side with the conviction of knowing everything better, the desire to keep the little they really knew to themselves. This led to the method of leaving the legations abroad completely in the dark as to the plans of the Government and the aims of its policy. The Austrian Ministers were forced to collect information about the Government's policy by studying the daily Press, for official information always arrived so late as to be useless. But political business must be run on the principle of give and take, and one cannot expect a diplomat to furnish his Ministry with valuable information if he has none to give. The result of this system was that the quality of the Austrian dispatches was inferior even to what was to be expected, considering the limited horizon of the majority of Austrian diplomats. One day at

Belgrave Square, when I had just read through a whole pile of these reports, and was mentally comparing their contents and style with the reports of the German legations which had been at my disposal in Warsaw, I could not help thinking that I had strayed into the servants' hall of diplomacy. This faulty Viennese organization, coupled with the old Austrian system of robbing officials of all personal initiative, till they become canting sneaks, with the sole aim of attaining the age at which they would be entitled to a pension, affords ample explanation of the lack of activity of Austria's diplomatic missions at a time when it was more than necessary to have it.

Yet even all these circumstances would not have been fatal if Austria's foreign policy had had the right orientation. It was more than unfortunate that all the signs of the times were persistently ignored and the Italian orientation exclusively adopted. The mobilization of the Northern Army Corps ordered by Mussolini in July 1934, to protect Austria's independence, had made such a deep impression on the responsible people in Vienna, that they were convinced that this phenomenon would again take place if called for. Vienna would not believe that the Duce might want, or might be forced, to alter his policy towards Austria under the increasing pressure of Germany. The Viennese know-alls made light of the Rome-Berlin axis and put their faith in the current anecdotes about the personal antipathy said to exist between Hitler and Mussolini.

A few days after Mussolini's visit to Germany in the autumn of 1937, I had a long conversation with Hornbostel. I expressed my conviction that Mussolini had now been finally forced to declare his political disinterestedness in the affairs of Czechoslovakia and Austria. Knowing the pertinacity with which Hitler pursued his aims, I thought it was out of the question that he should give way in this matter. He considered himself as the patron and protector of all Germans, and Austria and Czechoslovakia were the first stages and the foundation of the immense plans for the neo-German State. It was characteristic that the political regrouping of Europe aimed at by National Socialism should be called, in the Nazi Party jargon, '*Flur-Bereinigung*' (archaic term meaning 'to fix the boundaries'). I

consequently told him what I knew from reliable sources: that Mussolini had already, in the spring of that year, come to realize that, in view of the shifting balance of power in Europe, he was no longer in a position to defend Austria against the political pressure of the Third Reich. As a political realist and a typical representative of the theory of Italy's *sacro egoismo*, he must now attempt, before it was too late, to convert this realization into political cash, such as a military and political co-operation with Germany in Spain, in the Balkans, or in other regions. Austria was the first objective for Hitler, who had always gone his way without deviating to the right or the left. All this confirmed my opinion of the probability that the talks which had taken place between the two dictators in Munich and Berlin had been concerned with Austria.

Hornbostel listened to my arguments with a superior smile. First he proved, by reference to the official programme, that Hitler and Mussolini had not had time to talk about Austria, as the official events that had followed each other in rapid succession must have made any serious political discussion impossible. Besides, he had received dispatches from Rome that proved that Mussolini was still the same old, faithful friend of Austria, and the most reliable guarantor of her integrity. In any case, we could place more confidence in him in the case of an emergency than in the Western Powers, who might well honour Austria's memory with a tear, but would never raise a finger to help her.

After July 1934 this latter phrase had become the leading axiom of Vienna's policy. It is interesting that this poor opinion of the Western Power's willingness and ability to oppose a National Socialist hegemony in the Danube basin did not spring so much from a realization of the weariness and passivity of France and England, as from injured self-esteem. Vienna resented the criticisms that had been made of Austria's internal policy in those countries.

This leads us to the actual reason of Austria's mistaken policy which ended in the loss of her independence. When Austria turned away from democracy in 1933 and 1934, she had to seek the support of the mightiest Fascist State of that time—Italy. When later Italy's power gave way to that

of the Third Reich, Austria became an easy prey to National Socialism. The entire inner and outer political conceptions of the so-called 'Dollfuss road' were fundamentally wrong. From the inner-political angle, because it countered the totalitarian demands of Nazidom with the monstrous idea of an Austrian national totalitarianism, instead of with a fresh German ideology. This other ideology, whose standard-bearer Austria could have become, should only have been that of a consciously German democracy. This would have given all the Austrian manifestoes, whether inside or outside the frontiers, not only in the democratic West but in Germany itself, a definite gospel different from what those half-baked Viennese declarations could give, declarations which wavered uncertainly between authoritarian State and corporate democracy, which inspired nobody and convinced nobody.

Dollfuss could still have carried through this reversion to democracy if he had been a statesman and not a political '*Lokalpatriot*.' Well-meaning friends implored Dollfuss in January, as early as the first days of February 1934, to make his peace with the Austrian Socialists; to take two Socialists into the Government and thus reinstate legal order and democracy. But Dollfuss was gazing like a man in a hypnotic trance across the Alpine passes at Rome, both at secular and at clerical Rome—and so Fate took its course. Schuschnigg has attempted in his book, *Farewell Austria*, to justify this refusal to co-operate with social democracy. He affirms that a reconciliation with social democracy would only have been possible if Chancellor Dollfuss and his colleagues had abandoned their principles and given up their firm conviction that the party-state must be conquered in order to win the battle for Austria. In other words, Dollfuss and Schuschnigg were of the opinion that Austria could only be saved by the Government avoiding a broad democratic basis, and becoming in theory a 'One-Party' State, ruled by the Christian-Socialist clique.

Even to-day it is not altogether intelligible what was actually going on in the heads of Dollfuss, Fey, Schuschnigg, and company. The theory of Italy's whispered suggestions does not afford sufficient explanation. It is probable that those responsible for the Austrian régime had already lost

all sense of proportion, and were fatally over-rating their own power. This was my impression when I happened to be in Vienna at the time of the February revolt, and it has been confirmed by information I gathered later. I arrived in Vienna from Paris on the very day when the revolt broke out. Already at Linz our train was shot at by workmen in revolt. In Vienna there was a general strike, and the workmen ensconced themselves in the enormous apartment houses that had been erected by the Socialist administrations, and made a desperate attempt to defend the rights they had fought for and acquired during the recent years, with armed force. It was a hopeless undertaking, as was already apparent from a military point of view, considering the defensive character of this revolt. Although for reasons I have already explained, I hold no brief for the particular Viennese brand of social democracy, I felt that this civil war was a German, nay more, a European disaster.

Filled with fearful premonitions for the future, I went the next morning to the Chancellery, through empty, deserted streets, some of them barred by troops and barbed-wire entanglements. Arrived at the Chancellery, I visited my old acquaintance, the Press chief of the Government, Eduard Ludwig. I shall remember that conversation as long as I live. As we spoke the window-panes were rattling under the reverberations of the artillery fire with which Fey was bombarding the workmen's houses in the suburbs. I greeted Ludwig with the words that we had never yet met under such tragic circumstances, for now the Austrian Government was engaged in destroying those who were their staunchest and most powerful allies against the steadily increasing Nazi danger. Ludwig shrugged his shoulders, and replied with a smile and a disdainful gesture: "I don't see why we shouldn't get the better of the Nazis and the Sozis as well."

Austria's hereditary failing of over-confident frivolity could not have been more terribly manifested. It was then, in February 1934, that Austria was really lost. For the moment she only lost the sympathies of the democracies and of 'Leftist' world opinion. Dollfuss, who had still been the most popular figure at the World Economic Conference in London, the 'pocket-chancellor' who had been

compared in the Press to David fighting the Goliath of Nazidom, suddenly turned into the cruel butcher of the working classes, one who used heavy guns against his own people. And even worse than this was the fact that it was no longer possible to counter Nazi propaganda with an effective password that could electrify the masses.

This in itself would have been a task difficult and important enough to need the co-operation of all political and intellectual forces of the country. One of the chief difficulties was that the average Austrian had no idea what conditions in the Third Reich were really like. In general, the Austrian, like the Bavarian, has an instinctive dislike for the arrogant and brusque manner of the North German. At the same time he is profoundly convinced of the efficiency and superiority of the 'Reichs' German, and prepared to see all German matters through the medium of uncritical enthusiasm. With the possible exception of the rather opportunist and internationally-minded Viennese, the Austrians were filled with a strong German feeling, like all frontier people who have been struggling for a long time to maintain their language. This circumstance predisposed the average Austrian, even when he was not a National Socialist, to believe all that the German broadcasts and the Nazi Press told him about the marvellous conditions of life in the Third Reich. The further he was removed from the frontier, the more he was prejudiced in Germany's favour, and it is characteristic that National Socialism was able to establish itself more strongly than anywhere else in Styria and Carinthia, provinces that had no common frontier with Germany, but had been fighting all through the nineteenth century to maintain the German language against the encroachments of the Slovene minorities. The Austrian saw nothing but the shining façade of the powerful political structure of the Third Reich.

It was really tragic to watch the pro-Habsburg propaganda, so ardently promoted by the Government, and especially by Schuschnigg, which was primarily intended to counteract National Socialism, actually achieving the contrary and unwittingly rendering the best possible service to Dr. Goebbels. The legitimist papers, magazines, and

pamphlets, such as *Der Oesterreicher* and *Der Christliche Staendestaat*, were not only anti-Nazi, but decidedly anti-German. The centres of legitimist propaganda became the camp of anxious Jews and reactionary Austrian ideologists, who, in their ignorance of the real conditions, treated the aggressiveness of Nazidom as an equivalent of the historical attitude of Prussianism. It was the worst mistake they could make. National Socialism is a universal German movement that has nothing in common with Prussianism. If one were to attempt to place the movement from a geographical or regional point of view, it must be ascribed rather to South Germany than to Prussia. Its founder is an Austrian, the birthplace of the movement was Munich, and the sources of the mental attitude which is typical of National Socialism are to be found in the soil inhabited by the Sudeten Germans. It is worth noting that after the collapse of the Empire in 1918, the first neo-pagan sect of Wotan idolators was founded not in Prussia, but in Bohemian Egerland, on former Austrian territory. Munich and Nuremberg had already possessed strong National Socialist minorities long before the movement became noticeable in Prussia, and especially in Berlin. Adolf Hitler knew very well what he was about when he began his struggle for power in Germany from the so-called Bavarian '*Ordnungszelle*.'

Legitimist propaganda in Austria attempted to describe German and Austrian, the men of Germany and Austria, and even the cultures of the two countries, as irreconcilable contrasts. Some people actually suggested that the Austrian dialect should be raised to the status of an official Austrian written language. And they did this at a time when the universal national consciousness of Germany had been tremendously strengthened through Adolf Hitler's movement as well as through the injustice of the peace treaties. The time had gone by when a call to the dynastic rivalry of Habsburg and Hohenzollern, which had become ancient history, could be used as a method of practical politics. The battle-cry of France in 1870 had been '*revanche pour Sadowa*,' but this could not be made Austria's rallying cry in 1936, for the great majority of her inhabitants not only were, but wished to remain, good Germans. Hundreds of times I have heard Austrians say that they refused to accept

the National Socialist ideology because they, as Germans, considered it un-German.

Therefore Austrian propaganda should have attempted to make it clear to the people that a man could be not only a good Austrian, but a good German as well, while refusing to accept the dictatorial pronouncements of the Brown House, which made 'National Socialist' equivalent to 'German.' The legitimist propaganda I have described, which was openly supported by the Government clique, not only failed to attain the desired aim of creating a movement for the recall of the Habsburgs, it actually alienated more Austrians than it attracted, and they became an easy prey to Nazi propaganda out of pure opposition to this petty Austrian ideology. As Schuschnigg wanted to rule according to the ideas of his ill-fated and politically ill-starred predecessor, Dollfuss, he had no alternative but to cling to the straw of 'legitimism.' From time to time he tried to make up for the suicidal effects of the work of the monarchists strangers to their times as to their people, by a declaration of loyalty to Germanism, but this was always too lukewarm to win over those who were wavering. The only result was that a few monarchists of venerable age, who still smarted under the lost battle of Koenigraetz in 1866, would appear at the Chancellery in order to lodge a protest against the designation of Austria as German, reminding their listener of Steenockerzeel (the Belgian château where Otto von Habsburg lives in exile.) Thus the insensate activities continued, because Schuschnigg was too weak, and possibly also too self-complacent, to call an energetic halt and find his way back to a popular government, which his predecessor had so carelessly relinquished. Finally, Schuschnigg's evanescent system floated away into the political vacuum. A witty Austrian once made the justifiable observation that one of the most redoubtable questions in political history would be : 'How was it possible that Schuschnigg's régime was maintained from 1934 to 1938?'

Those who may read these pages will perhaps be tempted to object that it is easy, and even rather cheap, to criticize the policy of a Government after its notorious collapse. I should like to say that I held these opinions, and expressed them, long before the annexation of Austria. Although it

was not my task to exercise an influence on Austria's home policy, I considered it my duty, in view of the national emergency, to give expression to my ideas in conversations with prominent Austrians. Unfortunately, only my less prominent compatriots accorded me a ready hearing and understanding. The 'competent authorities,' however, reacted to my warnings by accusing me of being tainted with National Socialist and subversive ideas! The servile creatures at the Chancellery could not understand that a man might be a loyal Austrian without being an ardent supporter of all the Chancellor's ideas. They wished to remove me from my post and get me out of the way, so as to wean me from the luxury of indulging in ideas of my own—according to the time-honoured maxim: 'If he is wrong, it serves him right, and if he is right, that is all the more reason to stop his mouth, for in that case he is dangerous.' It took the concentrated efforts of all my friends and of my always kindly and understanding chief, Baron Franckenstein, to retain me at my post. For me this experience was another proof of the dangers of the authoritarian system, which must inevitably injure itself with its own weapons.

The mistakes of the Austrian system of government were not limited to the aims of its internal and foreign policy. The leaders of the financial and economic departments did their bit as well to ripen the fruit of Austria for Nazi aggression. Herr Kienboeck, the President of the Austrian National Bank, who was rightly much admired for his financial technique, was the real dictator of Austria's economic policy under Schuschnigg, and he was an adherent of orthodox methods. He considered it his duty, and this was quite natural for a banker—to keep the schilling from falling and to have as high a covering in gold as possible. It was his chief ambition, through a consistent policy of deflation, to turn the Austrian schilling once more into a free currency, no longer restricted by the *Devisen* laws. Under normal circumstances this would have been a most laudable aim, and Kienboeck worked at it with surprising skill. Unfortunately, his efforts proved to be a misuse of energy. Just as the monarchist propaganda of the Government turned out to be a boon to Dr. Goebbels, so Kienboeck

economized for Schacht, and more than that, he was unwittingly instrumental through his policy in transferring the gold he had hoarded as rapidly as possible from Vienna to Berlin.

I am assuredly no admirer of the economic methods of National Socialism, and I am firmly convinced that their amazing success is only temporary, because it is achieved at the cost of the actual substance of the people. This also explains why Kienboeck, as a thrifty economist, refused to tolerate a financial policy whose cost would have to be borne by coming generations. But the problem of opposing National Socialist propaganda in Austria was also an economic one. Hundreds of thousands of Austrians without a job looked longingly towards the Third Reich, where the successful fight against unemployment appeared to them—and rightly so—as Adolf Hitler's greatest achievement. You only needed to sit down for half an hour in any Austrian inn and listen to the conversation of the young men, to realize that the most effective means of propaganda for National Socialism was the success of Germany's employment campaign, and the steadily decreasing numbers of unemployed. Hitler's formula, 'Work and bread for every working German,' must have had the effect of a bomb in Austria, which was suffering from a chronic economic crisis.

Schuschnigg did not possess much understanding for economic matters. He realized that employment was a necessity, but he was incapable of taking a firm stand against Kienboeck, with whom he had no close contact whatever. Both these men knew too little of the people and its needs to realize that it was imperative to create extended credits after the German pattern, if one was to combat the National Socialist propaganda effectively. Two years before Austria's downfall, Baar von Baarncfels, the Vice-Chancellor of the Austrian Government, said to me: "If we continue with Kienboeck's policy of deflation and do not provide full employment for the population, we shall all go under."

His prediction was to prove only too correct.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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### FAREWELL TO AUSTRIA

IN THE SPRING OF 1936 I had a lengthy conversation with Herr von Schuschnigg at the Vienna Chancellery. According to Viennese custom, I had to wait a long time before I was admitted. I employed this hour of enforced leisure in assimilating the impressions which the house on the Ballhausplatz now evoked, and in comparing them with those of the past. Little remained of the splendour of bygone days except a few portraits of Emperors. The silken wall-hangings were torn, the springs of the chair on which I was sitting had gone, the covers of the furniture were in holes. It was a picture of bankruptcy, but an armed bankruptcy; for as I looked down into the courtyard I saw a picket of soldiers armed to the teeth, who were grouped round some machine-guns. It was a depressing and sinister sight, which provided a vivid illustration of the ever-present danger. It seemed strange to think that these people expected the Nazis to try their next *putsch* again with three hundred men—as on that day in July, when Planetta, at the head of an armed band, had shot down the Chancellor. Two policemen were standing at the end of the passage and talking in subdued tones. Before the door that led into the ante-room of the Chancellor's study there was another armed soldier of the Schuschnigg guards. He was as tall as a house and wore a grim and dangerous expression. This was only apparent, for he was not grim, but was none the less a dangerous person, as was proved later—for this Cerberus who was supposed to defend the Chancellor with his life had been a convinced Nazi, and actually an S.S. man all the time! At last a door-

keeper of 'Old Austrian' appearance, wearing a morning-coat, approached me with a few polite words, and led me past the S.S. man into the Chancellor's presence. Schuschnigg looked tired out and weary. He was talking over the telephone as I came in, and he motioned to me to be seated. The conversation seemed to agitate him; his answers became more and more monosyllabic, and in the end he squashed his cigarette with a nervous gesture in an ash-tray which already contained dozens of cigarette-ends, and said crossly: "But I really can't do everything myself. Apply to the competent Minister." With that he slammed down the receiver.

We began to speak about England, about London and the activities of Baron Franckenstein, for whom the Chancellor appeared to entertain a high regard. "It is pleasant to know that we are well represented in at least one country," he said with an air of sad resignation. He seemed to be even more interested in Ireland than in England—the former, as a Catholic country, was obviously occupying his thoughts in a special way. Unfortunately, I could tell him very little about Ireland. Suddenly the conversation turned to Germany. Schuschnigg spoke of the necessity of finding some sort of *modus vivendi* with the Third Reich. Then he interrupted himself, looked at me searchingly through his glasses, and said: "Tell me quite frankly what you think. You know Germany much better than I do. Do you think it is at all possible to come to an understanding with Hitler?"

I shook my head and answered: "No, sir, not in the sense you would like. Adolf Hitler will never give up his aims."

"Yes—I don't think so either," the Chancellor said in a low voice. Then I took my leave.

In the ante-room I met a friend who advised me to call on the Chancellor's confidant in the building, an official in the office of President Miklas who was called Guido Schmidt, and took great interest in foreign politics. So I went to see Schmidt, whose name I was hearing for the first time. Guido Schmidt, who had not yet 'arrived,' was friendly and obliging. He kept me nearly two hours in his study in order to extract all kinds of information on foreign

affairs from me. Just as the Chancellor had done an hour earlier, he broached the subject of Austria's relations to Germany. Schmidt said, without beating about the bush: "If we cannot reach an agreement with Germany, we are lost. But we need somebody to negotiate for us with Adolf Hitler, so that we can get acceptable conditions." Obeying a sudden inspiration, I said that such a negotiation might perhaps be undertaken via London, which was now in good relations with Berlin owing to the Naval Agreement, and which was also interested in the maintenance of Austria's independence. Naturally, I did not know how the Foreign Office would react to such a suggestion, but I had no doubt that Baron Franckenstein, with his excellent official relations, would find it an easy matter to ascertain, privately and without prejudice, whether it would respond favourably or not. Schmidt looked at me with surprise. "Negotiation via London? That's an idea we never hit upon. It wouldn't be so bad . . . but no, why London? I think we must do it through Italy."

And that is what eventually happened. A few weeks later the world was taken by surprise by the Austro-German agreement of 11 July 1936, the terms of which should not be allowed to sink into oblivion. The Third Reich, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, undertook to recognize the full sovereignty of the Federal State of Austria and to treat the inner political developments, including the question of Austrian National Socialism, as a purely internal Austrian affair, on which the Third Reich would refrain from exercising direct or indirect influence.

The Austrian Federal Government promised to keep its policy, both in general and in its relations to the Third Reich, in line with the fundamental principle whereby Austria recognized herself as a German State. This treaty was boosted in the Press of the whole world as one of the greatest political successes and tactical victories of Chancellor Schuschnigg. That, however, was an error.

It would, of course, have been a success for Schuschnigg, and even more, a decisive victory for his policy, if the leaders of the Third Reich had really intended to keep their part of the treaty. Experience ought to have taught us by then

that the Third Reich possesses a—let us call it—intensely subjective way of looking upon treaties. The time was not so very remote when Hitler had seen fit to break the Treaty of Locarno. And had he not given the assurance, just before his troops marched into the Rhineland, that Germany would abide by Locarno? We forget only too readily that the morals of National Socialism, in international relations, put the welfare of the German people first, or, more precisely, what the Brown House considers the welfare of the German people. The idea of keeping treaties is naturally alien to such a disposition of mind and must necessarily be so. Treaties are no more than temporary tactical measures by means of which it is hoped to attain certain political aims, already decided on. When the desired success has been attained, the treaty is pushed aside or broken with a calm conscience, for it has become a matter of indifference, and, from the point of view of national egoism, valueless and, in fact, harmful.

We must not overlook the fact that the treaty of 11 July had a purposely equivocal meaning from the point of view of the Brown House, owing to the recognition of Austria as a German State. For Austria and the remainder of the world to be German involves a claim to a share of the common heritage of the German language and culture. But the leaders of the Third Reich read 'German' as the synonym of 'National Socialist.' Accordingly, the leaders of the Party looked upon every attempt of Schuschnigg to oppose National Socialism in Austria not as an inner political anti-Nazi, but as an anti-German measure which constituted a breach of the treaty. From the point of view of the Brown House all the other points of the treaty were meaningless declarations. The situation was hopeless. Under these conditions Germany's relations to Austria could no longer be regulated by treaties, as they had become simply a question of power.

The 11 July 1936 was an important date for me, for personal reasons. For on the same day on which Germany entered her short-lived union with Austria, I was married to Baroness Irmgard von Herman, at the *Dreifaltigkeitskirche* in Munich. My father's brother, Paul Huyn, Patriarch of Alexandria and former Archbishop of Prague, performed

the ceremony. This union has proved itself more fortunate and enduring than the other.

The results of the Austro-German Agreement were disastrous to the idea of Austrian independence, as it was the National Socialist and not the Austrian reading of the treaty that triumphed. At first the Austrian Nazis were rather crestfallen, as they could not understand how a man like Hitler could come to any agreement with the betrayer of the people, the traitor Schuschnigg ! But a few weeks later the Brown House of Munich and its emissaries had succeeded in convincing Hitler's Austrian adherents that the Fuehrer had not meant it in the literal sense as committed to paper. It was a temporary measure that the Fuehrer had thought out in order to paralyse the Austrian Government in its measures against National Socialist propaganda. Nothing had changed, the good Austrian Nazis were assured—they were just to carry on as heretofore, and they could be sure of a speedy victory and a certain reward.

This was exactly what happened. The only difference was that the entire machine of Austrian administration was so hampered by the German pressure that the Nazi propagandists could pursue their activities without hindrance. Beginning with the Chancellor down to the last local *gendarme*, nobody dared to take energetic measures against the Nazis, for according to the treaty they were supposed to have been won over to co-operation with the State. This proved an impossibility, as the demands of the national opposition increased in proportion to the concessions accorded to it. This game was repeated point for point, during the negotiations between the Sudeten Germans and the Czechs, with the same final spectacular victory for the National Socialists. Sometimes it would appear as though the Austrian Government had succeeded in winning over a group of moderate Nationalists for co-operation. This group would at once be repudiated by Berlin. The real Nazis obeyed orders and drew back, and the remainder of the nationally-minded population dared not commit themselves in case they might have to suffer for it when the *Anschluss* took place.

I have already shown in the preceding chapter why the Austrian idea as represented by Schuschnigg could hold no

popular appeal. Thus Austria, as a result of the July treaty, slid into the following hopeless position. On the one side there was a strong and active National Socialist minority, which comprised about a third of the population and was 'dynamic,' to use the favourite expression of our times. This minority knew exactly what it wanted and was supported by the entire power of the Third Reich. On the other side there was a disorderly crowd of Catholics, Clericals, Monarchists, Liberals, Socialists, and embittered *Heimwehr* men, who were at variance among themselves and were only united by the loose tie of their wish not to become Nazis. There could be no doubt as to the ultimate result of this unequal struggle.

The National Socialists worked with amazing consistency and efficiency. Money streamed in over the frontier to rebuild the Party machine and all its organizations—S.A., S.S., Hitler Youth, etc. The National Socialist tide was rising once more. The Nazis themselves became more and more fanatical and ready to fight, and the Austrian character, formerly so amiable, developed new, dangerous, and almost sinister traits.

In the summer of 1937 a German friend drove me in his car through the Austrian Alpine provinces. He told me how he had been looking forward to the trip before he left home, not least for the reason that he would be quite glad to get out of the National Socialist strait-jacket for a few weeks. He had got quite accustomed to the conditions in Germany, but nevertheless, he enjoyed the idea of coming to a country where he could say what he thought. He had been very surprised when the German officials at the Bavarian frontier had told him to attach the national insignia to his car. So he had tied on a Swastika flag, thinking that he would take it off when he got into Austria, as he did not approve of national demonstrations abroad. But he omitted to do so when he heard that the Austrian Nazis were in the habit of taking down the numbers of German cars which did not fly the Swastika and reporting them to the Party centres.

"I seem to have fallen out of the frying-pan into the fire," he said. "Your Nazis here in Austria appear to be much more radical than ours. You have no idea of the

things I have witnessed in the few days I have been over here."

"I know only too well," I replied. "The people here have been swept away by a mass-intoxication, and they all believe the Golden Age is dawning. It is just like it was twenty years ago, when they thought the deposition of the dynasty and the republic were going to bring them salvation."

We stopped in a small village in front of an inn where there was a petrol-pump, in order to fill up our tank. We had to ring several times, before a man in shirt-sleeves finally emerged slowly from the inn parlour and came forward to serve us with typical Austrian nonchalance. But when he caught sight of our German number-plate, his face became transfigured; his arm shot up in the so-called German salute, and everything was done with surprising, one might almost say, unnatural speed. While the man was busying himself at the back of the car, a strange creature approached with dragging steps from the other side: an enormous goitre supported by two short legs—the village idiot. He came quite close and stared at me vacantly. When I asked him what he wanted, he replied in a guttural, inarticulated voice: "I just wanted to say Heil Hitler!" After this historical scene we drove slowly through the village; music poured from the open windows, electrifying German marches from the Munich station. The Austrian stations with the 'Jew music' (by Beethoven, Mozart, etc.), occasionally directed by Toscanini in Salzburg, were naturally tabooed for reasons of national self-respect.

We spent that evening in Linz, which was, next to Graz, the stronghold of Nazidom. I rang up an old friend and schoolfellow of mine, who had been in the National Socialist Movement for years, thinking a conversation with him would provide me with a temperature chart of the Nazi feelings. We both knew that we were entrenched on opposite sides of the line, but up till then that had never interfered with our old friendship. My friend began by telling me quite openly that his National Socialist opinions had become fanatically intense in the course of the last few years. It went without saying that he spent all his holidays in Germany, so as to escape from the stench of

Austrian corruption for at least a few weeks in the year—and naturally he always assisted at the Nuremberg Party Rally. "We Nazis are determined to continue fighting until we win, even if we have to fight ten years!" he said, and continued: "I am bringing up my children in the Nazi belief and my little daughter of eight laughs at the teacher when he talks any nonsense about Austrian ideas. The rule of the Blacks (clericals) and the priests must cease, even if it costs bloodshed!"

"But do they all think as you do?"

"As I do? Why, I'm a moderate. Most of us in our group here in Linz hope that they'll let us have a free hand for twenty-four hours when we come into power, so that we can settle accounts with the red-white-red 'Pius Hussars' and the canting old women—everyone has his pet aversion." And his eyes, usually so kindly, blazed with an intense hatred of which I would never have thought him capable. I refused to enter into a discussion, for I knew from experience that it is quite hopeless to try to contend against a mania of this kind. I was glad when my wife came on the scene, and recognizing the precariousness of the situation, gave the conversation a new turn. When we left, my school-friend slipped an illegal Nazi paper into my pocket, telling me to be sure to read it, so that I might know how they felt in Linz.

When we left the inn, where hundreds of Linzer burghers were wont to consume their two to three litres of beer every evening, I heard how my friend called across to some acquaintances in loud tones: "*Drei Liter*" (Three litres). Owing to the fact that these words sounded rather like 'Heil Hitler,' they had become the camouflaged formula of greeting among Nazis. When I arrived at my hotel and unfolded the Nazi pamphlet, curious to see what it contained, I found a few articles insulting the Austrian régime, a sentimental description of an Austrian Nazi boy's pilgrimage to Berchtesgaden and on a separate sheet a set of verses in typescript. They began:

'Ten little Austrians were sitting at their wine,  
One sang the Wacht am Rhein, then there were nine.'

Steadily, the ten are reduced till only one remains: for thinking their own thoughts, for writing in illegal papers,

insulting leading personages, singing forbidden songs, refusing to go to Confession. The last verse ran thus :

‘The last little Austrian was oh ! so good and true,  
He cheered Schuschnigg and Innitzer—because he was a Jew.’

During that same summer of 1937, Prince Starhemberg had one of his last conversations with Schuschnigg. Starhemberg had ceased to be a power in the State since Schuschnigg had ousted him from the Government and made him ridiculous into the bargain by making him the head of the Austrian *Mutterschutz* (Protection of Mothers). The Prince said to some of his friends, who asked him what results his conversation with the Chancellor had had : “Austria is in process of complete political dissolution.” This terse, and for all its shattering pregnancy quite correct diagnosis, was characteristic of the man. Prince Starhemberg may have been a *condottiere* type, he may have been careless and impetuous at times, and he was not the man to work out systematic plans at his desk—but he had great political talent and he was what one calls ‘a devil of a fellow.’ He was one of those rare men who throw their entire personality into the service of the creed they happen to hold at the moment. He knew how to talk to the masses in their own idiom like no other man in Austria. He was energetic, brave, and a born leader. He was the only man in Austria for whom hundreds of young fellows would have allowed themselves to be cut to pieces. Considering the dearth of personalities, Schuschnigg should never have rejected the co-operation of such a man, before the State was thoroughly consolidated within and without, especially as Starhemberg had all the qualities which Schuschnigg lacked. But this is only an aside.

I only quote Starhemberg’s remark because it was in complete accordance with the observations I made during that summer holiday. Wherever I went in Austria, I found the same picture : an inevitable decline of faith in the State and its future. The patriotic movement had only a definite appeal in Vienna and in certain circles in Lower Austria. But I knew Austria too well not to realize that its fate would not be decided by Vienna, but by the provinces.

The different temper of Vienna, whose inhabitants

consisted of a high percentage of intellectuals—not all Jews by any means—all opposed to the National Socialist fanaticism, was misleading. It led many members of the foreign diplomatic missions in Austria to form a fairly optimistic judgment of the situation. They fell into the error, a frequent one in diplomats, of judging the political situation and the temper of a country by the conditions in the capital. As late as October 1937 a diplomat I had known for years, who was at the head of the legation of a South European state, told me when I met him at the restaurant 'Drei Husaren' that Austria was now over the hill. He said that the days of inner and outer-political dangers were over, the Government was consolidated, the police and the federal troops were loyal, the State also was externally secure through the tacit rivalry of Hitler and Mussolini. The Rome-Berlin axis and the co-operation between the two dictators which it involved was the best guarantee for the maintenance of Austria's independence. I only quote this to show how cruelly even an intelligent, practised, and objective observer can deceive himself.

I returned to London with the sorrowful conviction that I had seen the last of Austria as an independent State. Although it is not very pleasing to work for a firm to which one has become attached, and whose unavoidable bankruptcy one sees coming nearer and nearer, I threw myself determinedly and with a certain quixotic pride into routine work, in order to stifle my regrets and my premonitions. My work was varied enough. I had not only to write reports, inform the Vienna Government by telephone of events of interest to Austria, and supply the British journalists with information, but also to look after a great number of Austrians who came to the Legation with all sorts of plans, ideas, and worries.

People would come to me for the most fantastic reasons. There were artists whose dream it was to paint portraits of the Royal Family, an engraver who wanted to sculpt the Duke of Kent's little son in stone, a reciter who was convinced of the absolute necessity of reading the German Bible aloud in an English club, a theatrical producer pressing me to arrange with the British Government that he should be given the opportunity of arranging a pageant in London. "What

kind of pageant?" I asked in surprise. "Only a few months ago at the Coronation all the pageantry of England and the Empire was displayed. It is not the time for that now."

"Yes, it is. In 1938 I want delegations of all the peoples of the British Empire to march past the King and Queen on Constitution Hill. Maharajahs on elephants with their gorgeous followers, black Ashanti Princes with ferocious warriors, bushmen, redskins from Canada, Maoris, South Sea Islanders . . ."

"All right, all right," I interrupted, fearing he would continue to enumerate all the peoples under British rule in the world. "But do you really imagine that England has nothing else to think about? The international situation is anything but cheerful."

"That doesn't matter," my interlocutor insisted. "It will be a tremendous success and a marvellous tribute to the Empire. Don't you remember the splendid pageant in Vienna in 1908, for the Diamond Jubilee of Francis Joseph, when all the peoples of the Monarchy passed in their national costumes to pay tribute to the old Emperor? And do you remember the wonderful historical part of the pageant with Rudolf von Habsburg, Prince Eugène and Archduke Karl?"

"Of course I remember it. I was a boy then, and I watched the whole procession from the window of a house on the Ringstrasse. But do you really think the Austrian Jubilee pageant is such an encouraging sample? Ten years later there was nothing left of all the glories of the realm."

Just as I was saying good-bye to this visitor, the manservant brought me a visiting-card of imposing proportions, the kind that used to be carried in advance of Korean dignitaries. It must be somebody very important, I thought to myself. So he was, for his card betrayed the fact that he was on the committee of the Viennese Anti-Noise League. He was serious and determined in his manner, as a member of a committee should be, and he wanted to know immediately what had been done to combat noise in London. As I am in deep sympathy with this movement, I was able to tell him something about welded rails in the Tube and of the prohibition to sound the horns of cars at night. I

also told him about the London Anti-Noise League which pursues the same praiseworthy aims.

The late autumn of 1937 brought me a spate of strange visitors. I can still visualize the elderly Viennese lady who sat opposite me in a state of agitation, and told me defiantly that she must do something here in London against the caging of birds in Austria. She knew how fond English people were of animals, and it was well known in Vienna that the English R.S.P.C.A. was the most powerful society of its kind in the world. Now the horrible custom of keeping birds in cages was very rife in Austria, and worst of all in some valleys of the Salzkammergut, where the superstitious peasant-women kept bullfinches in little cages. "And do you know why?" exclaimed my visitor. "You won't believe it! The people there believe that if one cannot get a priest when one is about to die, one can make a valid confession to a bullfinch!"

"Is that why the bullfinch is also called *Dompfaff*?" (Church dignitary) I asked.

"I don't know, but I can tell you that I have been trying for years to combat this crazy superstition. But it's no use. At last I wrote to the Ministry of Education, and do you know what they answered? That this was 'a venerable religious usage.' You must help me. Don't you think you could get something about it into the English newspapers?"

Another time an Austrian journalist who represented a great Viennese newspaper in London came to see me. With an air of mystery, he drew a letter from his case and told me that he had been sent by his editor, who had a request to make which I must fulfil in the interests of the State. Somebody in London had attempted to insult the Chancellor in the most infamous manner. "But see for yourself," he continued, "what my editor received from London from a certain Wilhelm von Dettelsbach, with the request that he should publish it in his paper."

He handed me the following poem of which I will quote the text *verbatim* for those of my readers who can read German. It was headed by the superscription: 'After reading Kurt von Schuschnigg's *Dreimal Oesterreich*' (translated under the title *Farewell Austria*). It is a sympathetic

evocation of the Austrian dreamer, awakened by the great hour and ready to defend his ancient heritage and build it up anew.

‘Man liest das Buch und liest. Auf jeder Seite  
 Ersteht vor meinen Augen Oesterreich,  
 In jeder klingt wie silbern das Gelaeute,  
 Niemals dem Ohr entschwunden, aus der Weite,  
 Ein Klang der Heimatsglocken, ernst und weich,  
 Ist’s nicht der Mensch, den wir vor allem lieben  
 Der zu der Landschaft Oesterreichs gehoert,  
 Ist er’s nicht, hier von Meisterhand beschrieben  
 Gross, wenn die Stunde ihm das Geigen stoert,  
 Er zoeg dies vor, doch wenn’s die Stunde wehrt  
 Ringt er mit ihm und ist sein Herr geblieben.  
 Ja, dieses Buch des Schoepfers und des Erben  
 Er kuendet allen Oesterreichers Art !  
 So wissen wir zu kaempfen und zu werben  
 Und so verwalten wir das, was uns ward.  
 In Ehrfurcht bauen wir auf alter Erde  
 Titanenhaftes neu, das eine Zierde werde.’

DR. WILHELM VON DETTELSBACH,  
 London.

When I had finished reading, I said : “ But that is quite harmless, and besides it is a really fine poem. I like it.”

“ But read the first letters downwards, it is an acrostic.”

And then I deciphered : *Meineideiger Jesuit*—Perjured Jesuit ! I laughed aloud, I could not help myself, and I said : “ He’s a great guy—and a really talented fellow, your Nazi ! The poem is brilliantly done. My respects to your editor for noticing this clever leg-pull ! But what do you want me to do about it ? ”

The journalist wanted to know who this Dettelsbach was. The letter had been posted in Paddington, and the writer had given the address of a number in Curzon Street, which did not exist. Could I help ? Of course, I had no idea as to the man’s identity, and I remarked soothingly that his editor should content himself with the fact that he had not printed the poem, and let the matter rest.

During that period the Legation was like a bee-hive, for we were in the midst of the preparations for the fancy-dress ball, which Baron Franckenstein used to arrange every

year in aid of the Austrian Winter Relief Fund. Artists, photographers, yodlers, zither-players, beer-merchants, and caterers fell over each other in order to assist with the preparations or to take some part in the festivities. This time the motto of the ball was Salzburg at the time of Mozart. Weeks beforehand cases filled with treasures of genuine baroque peasant furniture were deposited at Belgrave Square, in order to transform the formal dignity of the reception rooms into 'homely' Austrian farmhouse rooms. Two gifted young Viennese artists painted and hammered late into the night. In the entrance they built up a gaily coloured Austrian *Tabak-Trafik* and a café, and over the entrance of the tobacconist's there was the old familiar sign of the Turk smoking his *tshibouk*. One could buy Austrian picture-postcards there, and send them with a special post-mark from London via Salzburg back to London as philatelic rarities.

The rooms on the ground floor were transformed into inn-parlours. One great hall was divided by two wooden partitions set up cross-wise into four compartments, which were furnished in genuine peasant style. Thus the hall presented a different aspect according to the four angles from which it was viewed. In the next room, the walls of which were decorated with Austrian peasant scarves and Upper Austrian pottery, a long peasant wedding-table had been set up instead of a buffet, and on the night of the ball a sucking-pig was roasted there on the spit.

On the afternoon preceding the ball we were honoured by a visit from Queen Mary, who went round with Baron Franckenstein to see the treasures of old Austrian peasant-craft, and admired them with the genuine courtesy of true appreciation. Tea was served to a very small company at one of the peasant-tables. The Queen was extremely gracious. My wife and I were very happy to have the privilege of spending that hour in the company of the Royal Lady who has been a model, not only to her great Empire, but to the whole world of the great virtues of her threefold dignities: Queen, wife, and mother.

The ball took place on the following evening. Hundreds of more or less genuinely costumed Tyrolese lads and lasses

from England and Austria filled the hall. Mozart reigned alone in the ball-rooms on the first floor—Mozart being the tutelary deity of Salzburg, although as history teaches, he would have nothing to do with it. The great mirrors on the walls were painted with characters from Mozart's operas, and garlands cut out from pastel-coloured materials veiled the ceilings. At midnight the youthful Mozart got into a genuine sedan chair of the period and was borne through the rooms to the strains of his own music. The climax of the festivities was reached when Maria Elsner sang the all-too-popular song, '*Wien, Wien, nur du allein,*' and all the guests joined enthusiastically in the chorus. Baron Franckenstein was the model host, tireless in his zeal to entertain his guests, going from group to group. On the first floor the dancing continued unflaggingly into the early hours of the morning, and downstairs reigned a true Austrian popular *stimmung*, as people ate Viennese sausages, liver-dumpling soup, and *gulyas* to the strains of zither and accordion.

In spite of the swing with which the ball proceeded and the general gaiety, I could not rejoice with the others who were singing and dancing and laughing—I could not shake off my gloomy premonitions. I met only one other person who seemed to feel as I did, an Austrian artist who said to me with an expressive gesture : " Here they go dancing and joking and how few of them know that this is the last time they will dance at this Legation ! "

I answered sadly : " It's always been like this, my dear fellow. You remember what Goethe says : The people never feel the devil, even when he holds them by the scruff of their necks. . . . "

Only too soon I was forced to immerse myself once more in politics. The first items of news were coming through from Austria of increased unrest in the National Socialist camp. The Vienna police prepared for their last great coup. Suddenly they occupied the offices of the Austrian Nazis in the Teinfaltstrasse, where they were working under the alias of a reconciliation committee, and a great amount of compromising material was seized. Several plans were found which proved beyond doubt that the Austrian Nazis intended to overthrow the Government by revolutionary means, and with the assistance of the Third Reich. We in



*Photo: Dr. Erich Salomon*

At the Salzburg fancy dress ball at the Austrian Legation in December 1937.  
(Second from left) Count Huyn. (Second from right) Countess Huyn.



Their Majesties the King and Queen, then Duke and Duchess of York, at a reception at the Austrian Legation on the occasion of Chancellor von Schuschnigg's state visit to London.

London were only regaled with rumours, for the Austrian Government had become too weak to summon the necessary courage to disclose the truth to the world and to the people of Austria. It was reported that a leading Austrian Nazi had formulated a plan which had been elaborated in Vienna and in Munich, according to which three hundred Austrian Nazis disguised as monarchists were to set fire to the German Legation in Vienna and murder the minister, Herr von Papen. In this manner the march of German troops into Austria was to be provoked. The newspapers, on the other hand, reported that all these rumours had been exaggerated. A Nazi terrorist had privately elaborated certain plans which nobody had taken seriously.

Naturally, I was anxious to find out how much truth all this talk contained, and I sent an inquiry to Vienna. The answer was evasive and unsatisfactory. We were informed that writings inimical to the State and revolutionary plans had actually been found, but that the Chancellor had reserved the material for his exclusive personal use. He attempted to do so, and without much success, in Berchtesgaden. The report concluded with some soothing phrases, of which one has remained in my memory : that the Nazis could not get out of their well-known habit of playing Red Indians. All this was not really serious. We must not believe the occasional rumours of the possibility of a march of German troops into Austria. The Government had the situation well in hand. . . . The 'Old Austrian' Court Councillor with his technique for 'calming down,' remained unaffected right up to the steps of the gallows !

Soon afterwards the second storm-signal sounded. This was the elimination of Blomberg, Fritsch, and the other German generals. It had been an open secret for a considerable time that the generals represented the strongest and most efficient brake on the impetuous foreign policy of the Reich. In Radical Party circles, the Army leaders and certain diplomats from the Wilhelmstrasse (*not* Herr von Ribbentrop), were called poltroons, because they were always advising caution and did not want to put the German military machine, which was still in the making, to the test. The purge of January 1938 was the overthrow of the balance that had existed in Germany up to that date

between the Radical-dynamic, and the Conservative-static group, and it led to the preponderance of the former. It was not till then that Hitler became the true master of Germany, and this momentous change created the basis of all the important events which overshadowed Europe in 1938.

Hitler proceeded with the purposeful consecutiveness which is characteristic of his political actions in this struggle for power. A few months earlier he discussed this problem with a visitor with remarkable candour and lucidity. At that time he said that, throughout the course of history, it had been one of the foremost tasks of a leading German statesman to put the Army in its proper place. As long as it had existed, the German Army had shown a tendency to form a State within the State and arrogate to itself an influence which did not appertain to it in political affairs. Already had Frederick the Great fully realized this problem and solved it brilliantly during his reign in favour of the State. Bismarck had been forced to continue the struggle against the influence of the generals, and he never succeeded entirely in overcoming the military *camarilla*. Hitler said that he himself was determined to carry on the struggle and to make the Army into what it should be in a powerful State—the swordbearer of the nation, but no more.

Even this event, so fateful for Austria, was belittled by the well-known soothing voices from Vienna. When I pointed out the seriousness of the newly created position, the leading official explained that the Austrian Government saw no cause for alarm. On the contrary, it was a good thing that the Government of the Reich must now turn its attention to internal problems. The new generals, Keitel and Brauchitsch, were soldiers only, like their predecessors, so nothing had changed. The transfer of General von Reichenau, who was known to be a hotspur, from Munich to Leipzig, further removed from the Austrian frontier, was also a favourable symptom. I have not been able to ascertain whether this self-delusion was intentional or unconscious.

We did not have to wait long for the results of this internal political revolution in Germany to become manifest. Adolf Hitler was now safe from an attack from the rear, and could

turn all the forces of the united Reich towards the external problems which appeared so pressing to him. The longed-for 'revision of the landmarks' could begin. As usual, Hitler worked speedily and did not give his opponent time for reflection. A few days later the Austrian Chancellor was sitting opposite him in Berchtesgaden.

Much has been written, and even more has been improvised, about this dramatic interview, and it is not my intention to increase the number of unauthorized versions. The two principal actors have kept silence : the one because he wished to, the other because he had to. Naturally, I heard dozens of different, sometimes contradictory, versions from Vienna about what actually happened ; I cannot vouch for their veracity, even when they were given with an air of authority. One thing is certain—the Berchtesgaden interview must have been conducted in an uncompromising manner. Hitler gave Schuschnigg to understand in unmistakable terms that he alone was the leader of all Germans, and that Austria was entirely and exclusively dependent on the goodwill of Germany. Schuschnigg was not to accept any assistance from abroad to help him continue his policy of oppressing the people. He had better submit, accept Hitler's terms, and carry out the measures dictated to him at the agreed hour. It also seems certain that Hitler made use of the, by no means unintentional, presence of the generals in order to threaten Schuschnigg with military reprisals in the event of his continuing in his obstinate attitude. Thus the Chancellor was forced to accept the Fuehrer's conditions—in order to gain time. Then he spent hours arguing with Hitler about each separate point.

We in London received only insufficient information about all these events, as the Chancellor retired immediately after his return from Berchtesgaden in order to convince President Miklas of the necessity of obeying Hitler's behests. In Vienna there was a complete lack of orientation ; I can still visualize the head-lines of a Viennese newspaper, triumphantly announcing : ' Schuschnigg returns victorious from Berchtesgaden ! ' Personally, I felt sure that Berchtesgaden must be the beginning of the end. On the evening when Schuschnigg went from Salzburg to Vienna in his State compartment I entered in my diary, which, unfor-

tunately, contains only sporadic entries : ‘To-day meeting between Hitler and Schuschnigg in Berchtesgaden. Nobody knows what it means. The penitent’s pilgrimage to Canossa ? A new Gastein ? The first step toward complete *Gleichschaltung* ? Assuredly Berchtesgaden is an historical event, a tremendous step towards the agreement between Germany and Austria, which can only mean the victory of National Socialism.’

When the Press of the whole world had already published more or less exact descriptions of the events at Berchtesgaden, two telegrams in cipher arrived within a short time of one another at the Austrian Legation in London, containing a coloured description of the conditions Schuschnigg had accepted to bring about the so-called Austro-German agreement, which was euphemistically called the German peace, during the following few weeks. These two elaborations, obviously products of the combined ingenuity of Guido Schmidt and Herr von Hornbostel, threw more light than any other report on the sudden fall of Austria. The first telegram was a more or less objective report, but the second, which rendered the first invalid, spoke only of compromise and agreement. Even the harmless injunction in the first telegram, that we were not to conceal the violent character of the Berchtesgaden interview when speaking about it in authoritative quarters in England, was characteristically missing in the second telegram. When I had read these two telegrams and was asked what I thought, I could only reply :

“Now we are lost. These instructions could not be very different if they had come straight from the Brown House. I am afraid the day is not far distant when we shall no longer be following instructions from Vienna, but listening to the voice of our own conscience instead. Vienna no longer appears to be its own master.”

The same day—it was 14 February—I had an informative telephone conversation at midday with the Vienna Chancellor. The man at the other end of the wire betrayed, probably against his will, and certainly against his orders, how hopeless the position was in which the Austrian Government found itself. He contradicted himself with nearly every sentence he said—obviously it was more than he could do

to suppress his personal opinions in favour of those which had been officially prescribed for him.

"What are the results of Berchtesgaden?" I called into the telephone. "Did the Chancellor have to give way on every point?"

"No," came the distant voice, "not on every point, although he had to submit to certain demands. Seyss-Inquart is probably going to be made Minister for Public Security—but Germany has given us a guarantee that the subversive movement will no longer be allowed in Austria."

This really could not allay my fears. So I asked how they imagined this would be done.

"I don't know either. But I have orders to say that with the help of Germany subversion will be stamped out in Austria."

"That's an imposing sentence," I called back. "And what else is going to happen?"

"The Nazi leader Leopold will disappear from Austria; Tavs is to be handed over to Germany, and the Press peace with Germany is to be much more strictly enforced."

"So we're to have *Gleichschaltung*," I said. It was enough for me, I had no need to hear more.

When I went to report my Vienna conversation to Baron Franckenstein, I added that we might soon have to pack our suit-cases. The enforced coalition between Schuschnigg and the Nazis was, of course, impossible to maintain. Austria was now going through the same experience as Germany, in February 1933, in the interim between the transfer of power and the dictatorship. As this was obviously a repetition of history, we could now expect the Vienna version of the Reichstag Fire, which must bring about the end of the State.

In those hectic days, when I was working under conditions of extreme mental and physical stress, and the telephone never ceased ringing from morning till late at night, I was hit by a great personal misfortune. My dear father, who had celebrated his eightieth birthday a few weeks earlier, in perfect health, had become seriously ill, and I was continually being urged by letters and telegrams to hasten to his side if I wished to see him alive. I felt that I had no right to leave my post at such a moment—I was still too much of a

soldier for that. On 20 February, as I was listening to Adolf Hitler's great speech in the Reichstag on the wireless at a friend's house, a trunk-call from my uncle, the Patriarch of Alexandria, was transmitted to me. He implored me to come to South Tyrol at once—my father was dying. I felt as though my heart would break when I had to refuse his request. The next day my father died at Rottenbuch, near Bozen.

Hitler's speech of 20 February was a glorification of the gigantic success of the Third Reich in the domain of economic, social, and cultural(!) life. He spoke of the fulfilment of the Reich, of the fanatical will which animated the Party and the Army, he spoke of steel and iron which would protect the German people, he spoke of strengthening the Army and of throwing in all Germany's defence measures against the international campaign of lies and 'poisoning of the wells.' He disparaged Eden, he let himself go about the conflict in the Far East, Manchukuo, Spain, and Bolshevism, and quite at the end he found a few words for the compromise with Austria. I recall them to your memory :

"I am happy to be able to inform you that we have reached a further understanding within the last few days with a country that must be specially near to our hearts for many reasons. The difficulties that arose in carrying out the agreement of 11 July forced us to make an effort to obviate misunderstandings and obstacles in the way of a final reconciliation."

Hitler continued with a brief description of the Berchtesgaden agreement, which he described as a complement to the treaty of 11 July, and went on to say : "I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks to the Austrian Chancellor in the hearing of the German people, for the true understanding and the warm-hearted readiness with which he accepted my invitation and exerted himself to find, in co-operation with me, a way which is equally in the interests of both countries, as in the interest of the entire German people, that universal German people whose sons we all are, no matter where the cradle of our home had stood. I believe that we have also made a contribution to the cause of European peace. The surest proof of the correctness of our assumption is the indignant fury of those democratic citizens of the world who, while they are always talking of

peace, never allow an opportunity to go by without agitating for war. They are incensed and angry at our agreement, therefore we can rightly assume that it is good and right."

There is only one comment to be made on this. Three weeks later German troops stood on Austrian soil.

Schuschnigg spoke on 24 February. He was fighting with his back to the wall, fighting his last desperate fight for Austria and liberty. Now in the hour of need, when all seemed lost, the fighter in him awoke. He was inspiring, he carried one away, and at that moment he was really great. But it was too late. When I heard his speech I was reminded of Bruening in his last Reichstag speeches, the pathos of which was strangely different from his former more professorial discourses. There was a strong similitude between the characters and the fate of these two men. Both had held all the power in their hands, and they did not awake to action until it had escaped them, and the waters were already closing over their heads. I asked myself with misgiving whether this might be the particular tragedy of the German intellectual, the German democrat—perhaps of all democrats? Ever and ever again those terrible words—too late!

On 26 February I journeyed to Austria, to Gmunden, to the grave of my father. I noticed no outward change in Austria, at any rate, not in the provinces. In the streets I occasionally saw young men wearing small metal swastikas in their button-holes and greeting each other with a quick lifting of the right arm. But all this was done undemonstratively, quietly, and naturally, as a matter of course. In the shops, too, I sometimes heard a "Heil Hitler!" instead of the familiar "Gruess Gott!" As far as I could see, the patriotically-minded population did not appear to realize how serious the situation really was. They were rather optimistic, they honestly believed that they would be able to live peacefully side by side with the Nazis, and they thought the national opposition would be absorbed into the Government front. This illusion was so strong that even I could not resist being carried away at times by the wave of optimism.

In Gmunden I met by chance a high official of the Upper Austrian Provincial Government, who was also quite con-

fidant about Austria's future. He told me that the number and the power of the Nazis in Austria was being over-estimated abroad. "Here in Upper Austria," he said, "the Nazis are particularly strong, and yet they hardly constitute more than a quarter of the population. A third is too high a figure. Of course, there are a great number of Nazis in Linz, but the peasants in the country, who constitute the majority of the population, will have nothing to do with National Socialism, for obvious reasons. The peasants know through hearsay that one cannot do as one likes about farming in the Third Reich, and if the Austrian peasant hates anything wholeheartedly, it is being ordered about by the authorities. Our peasants are masters on their own land, and masters they want to remain."

When I had concluded my melancholy business in Gmunden, I travelled to Bozen, where I had also to attend to urgent private matters. On 9 March I crossed the Brenner again in radiant sunshine, and arrived in Innsbruck. My train to Boulogne was due to leave in two hours, so I employed the spare time in walking round the dear old streets of the familiar town. As soon as I came out of the station on to the Suedtiroler Platz, I saw that something out of the common was going on. Red-white-red banners had been hoisted on the flag-staffs, the windows were being decorated with flowers and Tyrolese eagles, and detachments of Tyrolers in their colourful historical costumes and their characteristic broad-brimmed hats were marching through the streets. When I inquired what these preparations meant, I was told that the Chancellor was expected to arrive at five in the afternoon from Vienna, and that he was going to make a speech.

I strolled about in the streets, watching the preparations. The entire population seemed to have turned out, and cars and lorries were continually coming in from the surrounding country-side with new detachments, carrying their flags and banners, some of which had come down from the Napoleonic wars in the days of Andreas Hofer. The streets leading to the station were already lined with serried rows of people—men, women, and children all holding little flags and wearing patriotic insignia. But between these close ranks and the houses were scattered groups of boys and girls patrolling—

the Nazis ! The loyal Austrians were in the overwhelming majority, and I think I am not exaggerating when I say that there was one Nazi to every ten partisans of Schuschnigg. All these people were moving through the town as though they had been doing this from time immemorial : there were no hostile cries, no arguments, no provocations.

My time was up, so I pushed through the ever-increasing crowds and finally got back to the station—for I had to take the same train to Switzerland which was bringing Schuschnigg from Vienna. I arrived on the platform just in time. The train came in, and from his reserved Pullman at the end the Chancellor emerged—youthful and energetic. But his hair had gone grey, and one could see in his features the traces of what he had recently gone through. I got into my compartment, and after a few minutes the train began to move. Just as the wheels started revolving, the sound of many thousands crying "*Hoch !*" in unison sounded across from the Suedtiroler Platz. But the booming surge of the ever repeated cheers of a great multitude was suddenly cut through as with the crack of a whip by a cry thrice repeated, weaker but sharply accentuated and disciplined—" *Sieg Heil !*" The train was going faster now, I opened the window and leant out to hear once more the echoing roll of the "*Hochs !*" and again three sharp and painful "*Sieg Heils !*" This last acoustic impression of Austria appeared to me as a symbol. I looked back for a long time, gazing at Innsbruck, with its spires gleaming in the light of the setting sun. The first line of the song by the Emperor Maximilian, the Last Knight, who has been resting in his coffin in the Innsbruck *Hofkirche* for four centuries, came into my mind : ' Innsbruck, Innsbruck, I must leave thee. . . . '

I awoke the next morning at Laon, where I bought a Paris paper and read to my amazement that Chancellor Schuschnigg had announced at Innsbruck that a plebiscite was to be held on Sunday—in three days. I could not believe my eyes, and read the few lines over and over again. The man is gambling on his last throw, I thought with horror—Hitler will never allow this, for Schuschnigg must win an easy victory under the present conditions in Austria, with the population feeling as it does. The Third Reich will do all

in its power to prevent the plebiscite, as it will never allow itself to be beaten with its own weapons.

As soon as I arrived in London I drove straight to the legation, where, to my intense surprise, I found everybody optimistic. I said at once : " This plebiscite will never take place. Schuschnigg has also joined the gamblers, and he will lose. The end is coming." Then came my last painful twenty-four hours at the legation. The telephone rang like mad all the time, the ante-room was crowded with journalists who wanted to supply their papers with impressions of the death-agony of a State. I had to say the same thing over and over again, and I did my best to present the events that were moving me so profoundly, from the perspective of history. I attempted to point out that Europe was losing more than little Austria—for the belief in a moral order of the world was going to pieces, the belief that was so imperfectly represented by the misbegotten League of Nations. From now onwards might alone would decide the relations of European States to each other, until the time when a new order was built up—perhaps on the smoking ruins of this continent !

The news from Austria sounded more and more threatening. Excited crowds were surging in the streets of Vienna. In Bavaria and Franconia the German tanks were rolling and creaking towards the Austrian frontier. On Friday at 6 p.m. I was in Baron Franckenstein's study in order to read him the latest wires from the agencies. He only said in a sad, low voice :

" Everything is happening exactly as has been foretold."

At that moment my devoted secretary rushed in and cried :

" Vienna is on the line and wants to speak to you urgently."

It was the Chancellery. The well-known voice said in clear, unmoved tones :

" X has just come rushing into the Cabinet meeting and says that according to a police report German troops crossed the frontier approximately a quarter of an hour ago."

" What will happen now ?"

" I don't know. The Cabinet is still sitting."

That was all, and the connection was cut off. Later it

came to light that no German troops had been on Austrian soil at that time. The police report from the frontier was, however, a fact. Not until May did I learn from someone who was in a position to know the truth, that this alleged police report had been a National Socialist trick in order to ascertain whether Schuschnigg would offer armed resistance to the advancing German troops.

Everybody knows the sequel. Once more Schuschnigg's voice was heard from the Austrian broadcasting station, this time as a farewell to Austria. The 'Emperor quartet' by Haydn was played—the variations on the Austrian National Anthem, '*Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser.*'

On the following day I packed my personal belongings, which had accumulated at the office in the course of the years, and took them across to my flat. In the meantime, Adolf Hitler had arrived in Linz. By order of the one-day Government of Seyss-Inquart the Swastika flag was hoisted from 18 Belgrave Square. We had to send a servant to borrow one from the German Embassy. I had nothing more to do. I was tired out after the unparalleled tension and fatigue of the last few days, and I went to bed completely exhausted.

Again the telephone bell rang shrilly. An official of the Austrian Legation was on the wire, and told me rather officiously that the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Herr Wolff, had just telephoned in person from Vienna and wished to speak to me. As I was not to be found in the building, the Minister had ordered him to tell me that I was to travel to Vienna immediately by order of the Viennese Government.

"Did he tell you why?" I asked. "I have only just returned from Austria."

"No, he did not tell me. He only gave me the official order that you were to leave by the next train and report to him on your arrival."

Nobody will be surprised that I felt slightly uneasy about this very urgent command to report in Vienna. Schuschnigg was already in protective custody, so what was I to do in Vienna? I decided to await further developments and sent a polite and correctly worded telegram to Herr Wolff—whom I had known personally for many years—explaining that I was unfortunately unable, owing

to indisposition, to comply with his summons immediately and that I was sending an explanation in writing.

On the following morning—it was Sunday the thirteenth—Baron Franckenstein rang me up and informed me hesitatingly and gently that he had just received telephonic orders from Vienna to discharge me immediately from my post. My discharge itself did not affect me, as I had looked upon my mission as ended from the moment the Swastika flag was hoisted on the Legation, but it gave me a certain shock. My vague suspicions were confirmed, and I realized why Herr Wolff had considered it so very urgent that I should come to Vienna—naturally in order to make me ‘inoffensive’ by some means or other. For, if he had been so very anxious to secure my collaboration, he would surely have waited for my written report and my return to health. After all these thoughts had flashed through my mind with lightning speed, I said to Baron Franckenstein: “Sir, under the circumstances I look upon this decision from Vienna as an honour.”

A few hours later it was announced over the wireless that Austria had become a country of the Third Reich. Thus I had witnessed the fall of three States, to whose service I had dedicated myself—Imperial Austria, the German Republic, and now the little Austria. For the third time I had lost my country.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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### RETROSPECT AND OUTLOOK

*'Am Himmel, wenn Gewölk und Dunst zerrannen,  
Steht gross das alte Licht.  
Erblosen Todes sterben die Tyrannen,  
Tribunen zeugen nicht.'*

(‘When clouds and mists dissolve, the ancient light  
Shines clear for all to see.  
The tyrants pass away and leave no heirs,  
Tribunes beget no sons.’)

UNKNOWN GERMAN POET.

DURING THE AUTUMN OF 1938, we all experienced with horror the great crisis which very nearly plunged Europe into the nightmare of another war. Nobody who even occasionally followed foreign politics can have been surprised at the storm which broke out over Czechoslovakia, for the German Press campaign during the last year before the crisis was unmistakable enough. The first signs had already appeared five years earlier, and the expedition against Czechoslovakia was not initiated in Germany, but actually in Poland.

After Hitler had come into power, anxiety was naturally felt in Warsaw, lest the German forces released by National Socialism might be turned against the Danzig corridor and Upper Silesia. Therefore, in order to divert Germany's expansion towards the south-east, inspired articles appeared in the Polish Government Press, offering democratic Czechoslovakia as an oblation to German Fascism. This was all the easier, as there never had been much love lost between

Poland and Czechoslovakia. Warsaw never forgot the occupation of the duchy of Teschen by Czech troops, which happened while Poland was fighting Soviet Russia. Actually the propaganda against Czechoslovakia had never ceased since 1933, and had been carried on alternatively by Nazis, Poles, and Hungarians. Thus the only undecided factor was the date of the event, for the act itself had been determined upon long ago.

It is strange that the responsible leaders in the Hradshin appeared for a considerable time to take no notice of the gathering storm-clouds. They relied too much on the alliance with France and Russia, and on the efficacy of their own political creation, the Little Entente. On the whole, Prague looked more into the past than into the future, and Benes, that clever and busy politician, seemed to live longer than anybody else in the vanished world of the Geneva protocols.

Ever since the foundation of Czechoslovakia, a favourite subject of discussion among the inhabitants of Prague, over their beer and cigars, was an argument as to which would be worse : the restoration of the Habsburgs in Austria or the *Anschluss* of Austria to Germany. Usually the argument would exhaust itself, as the adherents of both theories were equal in numbers ; although there ought to have been no doubt from the point of view of Czech independence. It stands to reason that in the Europe of to-day, so largely influenced by nationalistic ideas, a new Austrian monarchy under the rule of Otto von Habsburg, with his traditional Austrian education, could not have exercised much attraction for the inhabitants of Czechoslovakia. I, personally, have always been convinced that the experiment of a restoration in Austria would have failed after a short time ; but the politicians of Prague must have thought differently, otherwise Benes would not have repeatedly declared that he preferred the *Anschluss* to the restoration of the Habsburgs. "Otto in Austria—and the representatives of the Little Entente will be recalled from Vienna !" he even used to threaten—during the last few years—when Habsburg emissaries tried to win him over by pointing out the menace of the increasing power of National Socialism. Obviously Benes was incapable of forgetting how he had helped to

destroy the realm that had once declared him guilty of high treason.

After the invasion of Austria by German troops, the only question which remained unsolved was how soon the Czech joint would begin to be roasted from several sides at the same time. It was obvious that Czechoslovakia alone would be incapable of resisting the united pressure of her three neighbours. Immediately after the *Anschluss* the problem was reduced to the following question: are Czechoslovakia's mighty allies, and friendly Great Britain, prepared to protect the Czech State during the coming crisis with every means at their disposal, even if this should lead to a new war—with all its unimaginable results? Everybody must have known that, after his diplomatic defeat of 21 May, Hitler would repeat his efforts, and exercise greater pressure. This was all the more apparent as the Fuehrer, in that same May of 1938, had ordered the erection of powerful fortifications on the Western front which would make a military co-operation of the French and Czech armies almost impossible, in view of the present-day superiority of defence over attack.

In the meantime, it looked as though the diplomacies of the Western Powers were resting rather prematurely on their laurels of 21 May, without having thought out the ultimate consequences of the position. Hitler was to disturb them only too soon. Western Europe would have had time, after 21 May, to review its political and military resources, and to reach a decision as to whether the Sudeten problem, or rather the question of maintaining the State known as Czechoslovakia, was worth another World War. As the answer would obviously have been in the negative—for that is the only explanation of the policy of Britain and France—it might have been better in the course of the summer to inform Benes of the Powers' intention not to fight. The guilt of this omission devolves primarily on France, which had undertaken certain obligations towards Czechoslovakia through her military alliance with that State. Britain was only formally interested in Czechoslovakia through her alliance with France.

Prague might have changed her course at the right moment. It is extremely probable that Czechoslovakia

would have been offered a better settlement in July than she received later in Munich, if she had voluntarily offered to give up her military alliance with Russia and acceded to Henlein's Carlsbad demands by giving full autonomy to the Sudeten Germans. In no circumstances could her plight have been worse; the world might have been spared a terrible crisis with all the attendant costs, and the Western Powers as well as the ideals of democracy would not have suffered an obvious diplomatic defeat.

But what has happened cannot be altered. Czechoslovakia as an independent State has ceased to exist; the Sudeten-German territories have been torn away and Pan-Germany has come into existence. This probably represents only a brief breathing-space in the development of Europe, but at least it permits us to survey the new conditions and to face the problems which the world will have to face in the future. The first matter for investigation should be as to whether the alterations of the map caused by the National Socialist policy of might will prove more permanent than the order established at Versailles. In order to investigate this problem with any hope of success, the first condition is to differentiate clearly between the Austrian and the Sudeten-German question.

The Austrian question has been solved by Adolf Hitler, and it is hardly to be expected that this problem will emerge again in our time. The Austrian question will probably take the same place in world opinion as the Bavarian or the Hanoverian question. From now onwards Austria will take part in the future development of the rest of Germany, and—if at all—play an independent role only within the German evolution or revolution. The attempt made by the Allied Powers in 1919 to keep the German remainder of the Habsburg monarchy outside the body of Germany, by denying the right of self-determination and forbidding the *Anschluss*, has failed—and rightly so. For me the problem of Austria versus Germany, even during the period of conflict from 1933 to 1938, was an internal political question with certain aspects of general importance, caused by the aggressive attitude of Hitler and the weakness of Austria. Post-War Austria was only a remainder—the unhistorical result of the subtraction accomplished at Versailles. A

country without a *raison d'être* cannot have the will to live. Besides, this Austria was only a conglomeration of separate districts, all leading a separate existence of their own—far more so than observers abroad ever realized ; their political unity was only manifested when they wished to make a united stand against the Vienna Government in order to defend the jealously guarded provincial autonomy.

Politically, Austria died in 1918. Everything that happened later was only a chain of unsuccessful efforts to galvanize the German part of the corpse. This explains why Austria allowed herself to be overpowered by National Socialism in March 1938 without resisting. I have already pointed out that Austria could only have had a chance of surviving the National Socialist attack as an independent state if she had been the representative of a German ideology. As it was, she was submerged, and I can see but little probability of her emerging once more and taking her place among independent states. Austria has vanished like many other realms that once were great—vanished like Burgundy—like the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. . . . The fundamental law of the survival of the fittest also governs the biology of nations—weighed and found wanting !

The question of the Sudetenland is different, especially in relation to that part of the country where most of the Sudeten-Germans live : Bohemia, that richest jewel in the lost crown of the Habsburgs. Bohemia is a world in itself. You need only glance at a physical map of Europe, and immediately your attention will be arrested by a square standing on one point, all four sides bounded by mountain chains ; instinctively you know that this must be *one* country. And so it is. For many centuries Bohemia has been an indivisible and undivided unit, which together with Moravia and Silesia constituted the historic lands of the Bohemian Crown. Now this country, which is perfectly balanced from an economic point of view as well, has been divided in order to satisfy the nationalistic idea. Historic and economic connections that have existed for hundreds of years have been severed, ancient lines of communication interrupted, and why ? Because, owing to an unscrupulous propaganda, unparalleled even in the history of Nazidom, which abounds in deceit and untruths, the Germans of

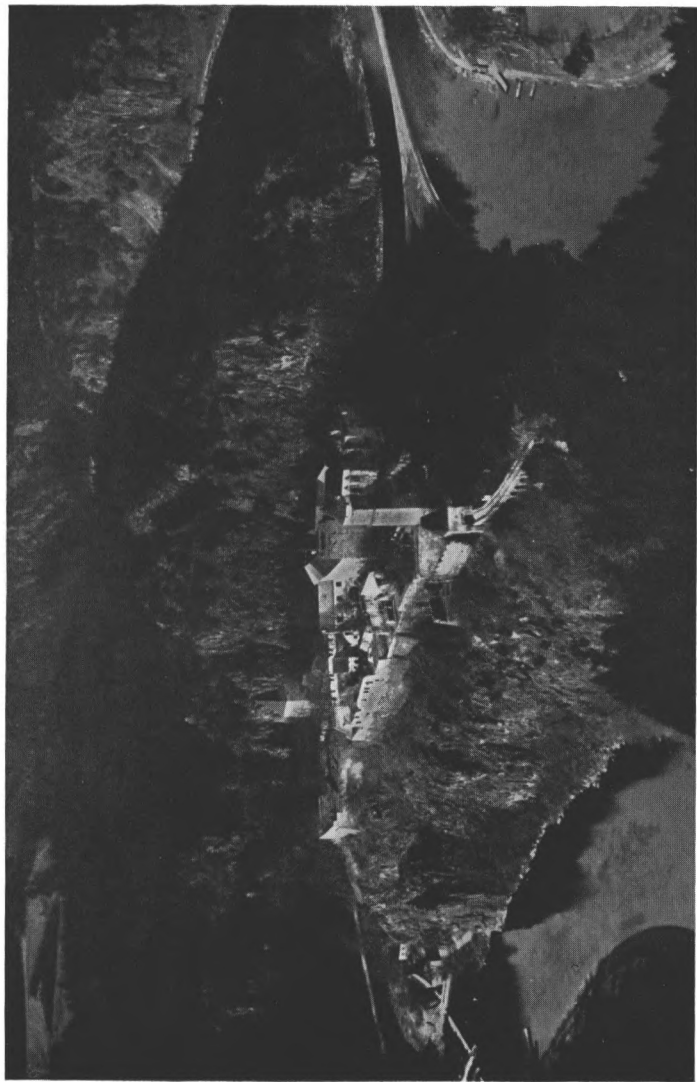
Bohemia suddenly discovered that they could no longer exist under the same government as the Czechs.

There is no denying the fact that the two peoples of Bohemia often quarrelled; even in the days of the Austrian monarchy, the Bohemian Diet was continually being obstructed and had constantly to be revived by artificial means. Nevertheless the Germans and the Czechs of Bohemia, in spite of their sometimes violent family quarrels, never doubted that they belonged to each other and that they must work in unison for the beautiful country which both races loved as their homeland, and which the poets of both tongues have praised with equal ardour. The Moldau, Bohemia's holy river, flows through German and through Czech territory, and every Bohemian—I purposely use this superannuated word—waxed enthusiastic when he spoke of the blessed lands through which it winds its tortuous way.

To divide Bohemia is equivalent to the wanton destruction of a work of art which Nature and Man have created by their combined efforts.

Admittedly a Bohemian problem has existed for centuries. Yet the question was never where the dividing line should be drawn between Czechs and Germans, but how these two races could be helped to live together in peace and amity. I cannot agree that this was impossible. Switzerland affords the proof that German- and French-speaking peoples can live together on excellent terms, the same Germans and Frenchmen who outside the frontiers of the Helvetic Confederacy have looked upon each other as hereditary enemies for centuries. There is not even an 'hereditary enmity' between Germans and Czechs, only a national antagonism caused, not by fundamental differences of temperament and outlook, but by the struggle for their national and economic welfare in Bohemia. The demands of these two peoples did not exclude each other as in the case of François I, who said the conciliatory words about his great rival Charles V: "What my brother Charles wants, I desire as well, namely Milan."

The struggle, even down to recent times, was not one for hegemony in Bohemia, only for equal rights for both races. Only a compromise formed on this basis would have served the real interests of the Bohemian people, no matter



The Moldau in Bohemia.



*Photo: Dr. Erich Salomon*

Lunching at the 'Savoy.'

(*Left to right*) Herr Neumayer (Austrian Finance Minister), Sir John Simon, Count Huyn, Sir Robert Kindersley.

which language they spoke. It was only the Nazi policy of might—not the alleged anxiety for the national weal of the German minorities—that falsified the problem so grossly. The thesis of self-determination of the peoples, popularized by Wilson the democrat, and the undeniably grave errors committed by the Czechs in the first ten to fifteen years after the Treaty of Versailles, were merely used as subterfuges—fig-leaves to cover the imperialistic shame.

The uncertainty of public opinion as to the real nature of the Czech Republic helped to obscure the Czechoslovakian question. Some saw Czechoslovakia as a democratic model State like Switzerland or Belgium ; others maintained that the Czechs were malevolently oppressing all their minorities—who together actually formed the majority—under cover of outwardly democratic forms. I need hardly mention the baseless propaganda of Herr Goebbels, wherein the Czech State was described as a hothouse of Bolshevism and a playground of ferocious Hussite hordes.

As is so often the case, the truth lies somewhere between the two extremes. The Czechs naturally had a nationalism of their own, like the Germans, the Magyars, and the Poles. There is no denying the fact that Czech officialdom overstepped its powers, and that attempts were made to Czechize (if I may coin a word) German or other districts by creating artificial minorities and promoting Czech expansion. Nevertheless, compared with the methods of government and administration which came into power after the War in Central and Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia was actually an oasis of liberty.

The divided opinion on Czechoslovakian conditions, which was noticeable in comparing the judgments of even objective observers, was caused by the fact that every observer based his judgment on the conditions of his own country. This is a very general error ; in politics there is no universal measure that can be applied to every nation. Liberty and democracy, an authoritarian régime and dictatorship are not absolute conceptions, but relative ones. That is why I have tried in this book to apply national standards to each country, and that is why, in discussing Poland, I arrived at quite different results than when I was examining the problem of Germany and Austria.

The Czechoslovakian question was not merely one of ideological aspects, but of national aspects on one side, and historical, geographical, and economic considerations on the other. This also has contributed to the confusion of world opinion. I personally am convinced that the economical and geographical considerations will prove the strongest in the long run, because I feel sure that the Sudeten borderlands cannot remain permanently divided from the Czech nucleus of Bohemia. It is impossible to impede the economic interchange between these two districts, which need each other, without creating a tension which must necessarily break down the barriers which might be erected.

A close economic connection of the Czech nucleus with Greater Germany would result in a political connection with far-reaching political results. Germany would find herself faced with a task far transcending Hitler's alleged aim of erecting a German national State. This foreshadows the possibility of future conflicts becoming more and more probable, the more Germany tries politically to safeguard the vast glacis of her south-eastern frontiers, which extend as far as the Balkans and the Black Sea. It is a debatable question whether National Socialist Germany will possess the moral authority to take over the freed inheritance of the Holy Roman Empire in the Danube basin and the surrounding regions. The Third Reich has might, but it has no authority ; it inspires fear, but it fails to inspire confidence. But authority and confidence are necessary in order to exercise an enduring hegemony over Central and South-Eastern Europe, the regions which fell into the lap of the Third Reich in September 1938.

For the moment Adolf Hitler has made the ancient dream of German nationalism come true : the last of the great European nations is embodied in one State, and Germany is united. Germany's national development began later than that of other countries. Italy overcame feudalism in the nineteenth century, and France, Germany's great European counterpart, attained her unity as early as the seventeenth century, when Germany was still in the throes of the Thirty Years War. This belated awakening of the German people to a common national consciousness was chiefly caused by the marked differences between the individual German

racés. Even to-day there is a greater difference between the human temperature of Vienna and Berlin than between Vienna and Budapest. The dozens of dynasties who ruled in Germany up to 1918 were not the cause but the result of the variety within the German people. Even the German Republic had to take the tribalism of the Germans into account when the Weimar Constitution was created.

The tribal differences alone cannot be made solely responsible for the delay in Germany's development into a national State. There is also the fundamental difference between Western Germany, which is Teutonic to the core, and Eastern Germany, which was only taken over in the late Middle Ages by German colonists who had been established on Slav soil. Vienna and Hamburg have much more in common than the two Prussian cities, Aachen and Breslau. The greater part of the ancient Germany of the Hohenstaufens was situated to the west and the south of the *limes romanus*, that oldest cultural demarcation line, which, even to-day, coincides approximately with the division between Catholic and Lutheran Germany. Religious differences were also partly responsible for delaying the process, irresistible in itself, of Germany's unification.

All these factors go to explain why Germany was in many respects several centuries behind the West. The classic period of France's literature preceded Goethe and Schiller by a hundred and fifty years, just as the French Revolution took place almost a century and a half before the German revolution, the shadow of which hangs over us to-day. One can hardly imagine a greater contrast than that between the French and German revolution—and yet both are landmarks in the development of the national idea in Europe. While the French Revolution gave the first great impetus to the national idea, the German revolution is culminating in that integral nationalism which rides rough-shod over all human rights and places the State and the nation in the very centre of things. It is only to-day that the ideas of the theorists of Nationalism, formulated in the last century, are being realized in their ultimate consequences. More than a hundred years ago the German philosopher, Hegel, said that the State represented the perfect ethical organism ; he was also the first to maintain in his writings that the

entire aim of human existence was centred in the State. It is a peculiarity of the rhythm of history that the realization of world-moving ideas only follows their inception after a certain period of time ; thus it is that all ideas are already fading by the time they are put into practice. Thus the dictators who behave as though they were the preservers and standard-bearers of the nationalistic idea in its most extreme development, are actually, though unwillingly, its destroyers. Under the influence of the nationalistic ideas of yesterday nationalistic rule is in force to-day.

The enlightened minds of Germany have always attempted to resist the nationalistic idea. From Lessing and Goethe down to Nietzsche and Thomas Mann there is an unbroken line of great Germans who would have no truck with nationalism, and even opposed it violently. Thus Schopenhauer, in his pithy manner, wrote that nationalism was the cheapest form of pride, because the man afflicted by it betrayed a lack of individual qualities in which he might take pride, otherwise he would not desire something he must share with millions of other men. Thomas Mann—to mention a contemporary—recognized the mental attitude of the German people, and opposed nationalism before it had become a national religion. Thomas Mann was the guest of the Polish Pen Club in Warsaw in the spring of 1927, when there was actually a latent state of war between Poland and Germany. The great author, who is now denationalized by the Third Reich, was welcomed by the *élite* of Poland as an ambassador of German intellectuality. At the banquet given in his honour he made a carefully worded speech which deeply impressed all of us who heard it. Referring to Goethe's example, he said that it availed but little to remain cool, sceptical, and unenthusiastic in times of national excitement. One must always remain what one is—an expression and immortalization of the German spirit and the German soul.

During the great September crisis, one could notice the gradual decline of the nationalistic idea. During those days when a new World War appeared inevitable, there were no excited crowds pouring through the streets of the European capitals as in 1914, there were no patriotic demonstrations, and no curses were uttered against the enemy of to-morrow.

There is less hatred among nations to-day, despite all attempts of nationalistic agitators to inflame it. A chasm divides the different nations, but a chasm from which has sprung a mental solidarity bridging old prejudices between the peoples. Between the new camps formed by this division the decision will fall, and not between the peoples. Those Germans who sat in fear all night long listening to the wireless because they did not want war, who hailed Chamberlain as their saviour in Munich, are they not also in the camp of Europe, like all other men who hate nationalistic aggression ? And Europe must and will be victorious if all the forces of reason are united.

Then a new ethical world order might be raised on the ruins of the world of nationalism, a world which has reverted to barbarism, and a new order founded on international and social peace. But this can only be realized if the moral tenets that rule the individual are also applied to States, peoples, and classes, in the sense of the profoundest words bequeathed to humanity ; the words of our Lord : For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?



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